



LORD DUFFERIN AT THE AGE OF 24  
*From a crayon drawing by James Swinton*

# HELEN'S TOWER

*by*

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# I

## BALLOON ADVENTURE

My first meeting with Lord Dufferin—Herr Beemelmans and the bombardment of Paris—The Gare de l'Est—The balloon episode—Mr. Nowell—The Benjamin Constant portrait—Miss Plimsoll's maritime beliefs—The Book—The Embassy reception—My cousin Terence's crime.

### (1)

At breakfast, the next morning, each of the three footmen wore powdered hair. My eyes wandered upwards from their buckled shoes, their silk stockings, their velvet breeches, to the frontage of their upper vesture. Enraptured—my gaze fixed itself upon their heads. The hair of each of them had that morning been drenched in oil; upon the agglutinated foundation thus achieved some early-rising hairdresser had puffed, sprinkled or thrown a preparation of powdered chalk. He had then, with a wide-pronged comb, striated this starched amalgam; parting it ruthlessly on the right side of the head; clawing it backwards above the ears.

The darkest of the three footmen responded ill to this treatment; his pink Auvergnat cheeks had assumed a plum-coloured tinge; the blue of his carefully shaven chin had turned to indigo. As he leant forward to hand me my porridge, the aiglets on his livery emitted a faint chink.

I raised a pointing finger.

‘Mummy,’ I piped, ‘why has this man got white hair?’

‘Hush, dear!’ interrupted Miss Plimsoll.

My mother’s eyes fluttered shyly: my aunt made her gesture of restrained irritation—that gesture which I later learnt to note with affection but with awe. The movement, as all her movements, was carefully controlled. Yet, when impatient, she would chafe one finger against the other, so that the diamonds and emeralds on her rings rubbed slowly against the skin of her little finger.

‘That,’ she said (as the footman retired towards the side-board), ‘was the one who understands English.’

I gathered from my mother’s wince of shyness that I had done something wrong. But at that moment occurred a diversion. The door opened; and from behind the screen came a gentleman with a beautiful white beard. The eye-glass leapt from his face as he advanced towards my mother. He enfolded her in an embrace. ‘My dear little Katie,’ he murmured, holding her two shoulders, smiling at her with the kindest grace. And thereafter, upon my curls, I felt a warm wide hand.

‘And so this,’ he lisped, ‘is the youngest?’

Such was my first conscious meeting with my Uncle Dufferin. It took place in the smaller dining-room of the Embassy in Paris on a May morning in the year 1892.

I use the expression ‘conscious meeting’ advisedly, since I suppose that unconsciously I must, at some moment during my previous five years, have already

met my uncle. True it is that at the hour of my birth he was in India and I in Persia. On that very Sunday when my first plaint broke suddenly upon the Bactrian air, my uncle was in fact visiting the tomb of Aurungzebe. My aunt has recorded that event in her diary :

‘ Another thing,’ she writes, ‘ to be visited in the neighbourhood was the tomb of Aurungzebe . . . As D. approached it an old man stepped forward and chanted something, the translation of which was, “ Aurungzebe, late Emperor of Delhi, I present to you the representative of the present Emperor of Delhi.” Then sugar-candy and spices were offered to D. and we proceeded on our way.’

They continued their progress to Golconda. Surely, during that journey, some telegram announcing my safe arrival must have been brought to the Viceregal train? I should like to feel that on that Monday morning, at some dusty outpost of the Nizam’s dominions, the long white train was jerked to an unexpected standstill; that the local station-master, bowing deeply, had advanced towards the detectives who had leapt as a man from every coach; that with a profound salaam he had handed to the first detective a small pink telegram; that the detective in his turn had passed it on to a khitmutgar, who bore upon his scarlet breast a D and a coronet in gold; and that by the hand of the agreeable Captain Balfour, A.D.C. to the Viceroy, the telegram had eventually been passed to my aunt. There she sat in the white and gold saloon with the slatted windows; upon the chintz canopies lay scattered the souvenirs of yesterday’s visit to Ellora; she would have opened the telegram with slow deliberation.

‘Dufferin,’ she would have exclaimed, ‘Katie has had another dear little boy!’

The train would then have moved on again, and the white dust, swirling into a high pillar of gold, would have descended slowly upon the still bowing station-master. Alone in Northern Hyderabad.

My aunt, I regret to say, makes no mention of this dramatic scene in her diary :

‘We spent the night,’ she records, ‘at Aurungabad ; it was very prettily illuminated, and there were fireworks after dinner and an address in the morning. This was the beginning of a very long day.’

Yet at some point during the five years precedent to that May morning of 1892 I must indeed have seen my uncle—at Claridge’s Hotel, perhaps, or perhaps in Rome—and he must already have placed his wide brown hand upon my curls. If so, I have no recollection of that benediction. But those spring days in Paris when I was five years old stand out in my memory with sharp distinctness. It was in such an atmosphere that my first conception of my decorative and tragic uncle shaped themselves in my mind.

(2)

We had arrived the night before from Buda Pesth, or more immediately, from Strassburg. It was in that then German city that we interrupted our journey in order to visit my father’s sister, Clementina. Hers had not been a resplendent marriage. My grandfather (a gifted but self-indulgent man) had not during her early youth encouraged any social opportunities. He him-

self would spend his days at the Thames Conservancy Board (of which he was Chairman) and in the evening he would drive to the Travellers' Club where he consumed partridges, half a bottle of champagne and the latest French novel. Yet every August he obliged his handsome daughter to accompany him to Switzerland. On one of such visits, in a pension at Interlaken, she met an elderly German widower of the name of Beemelmans. She was herself at that date over thirty years of age. Much to my grandfather's fury, and to my father's regret, she married this gentleman, who at the time held some minor post in the German Railways. They lived in the new quarter of Strassburg, where they owned a dim, trim little house, the front door of which bore a white enamel plate 'Ministerialrat Beemelmans'. They had an only child of the name of Friedrich, who was two years younger than myself. I treated him with that oily solicitude ('Now be careful, dear, there is a step coming') which the child of five adopts towards the child of three. The inside of the house was brown; the curtains in the Herrenzimmer were weighted with the smell of cigars; the little drawing-room contained many woodwork ornaments, such as chamois, thermometers, bear families, and rustic habitations, in what I now realise to have been the Swiss manner. There was a patch of garden at the back with a summer house and two glass balls on poles.

Herr Ministerialrat Beemelmans is not to me a vivid figure. He died some few years later and my recollection of him is blurred. I can recall only a round, guttural and tobacco-laden person, reminiscent of Wilhelm Busch's Tobias Knopp. Yet it was Herr



Ministerialrat Beemelmans who told me about the Franco-Prussian War.

He had himself been the very first German soldier to enter Strassburg. He had been present at the siege of Paris. He remembered the burning of St. Cloud ; and he would recount how the cannon fired and how the projectiles made a wide arc in the air and then descended with a heavy pounce upon the squares and streets of the French capital. He would indicate these trajectories with the stem of his pipe, accompanying the upward curve with the whine of an ascending projectile and concluding his imitation with a loud 'Boum und Krach'. I was fascinated by these descriptions and yet they filled me with dismay. For was I not myself, on Monday, proceeding, in the company of Miss Plimsoll, to that bombarded capital ? I hid my fears.

'Miss Plimsoll,' I enquired next morning, 'will there be cannon in Paris when we get there ?'

'Yes, dear—lovely cannon. You can count on that.'

My distaste for Paris was enhanced by this remark. I asked my mother about it later. 'Mummy,' I asked, 'is Paris a nice place ?' 'Yes,' she answered, 'you will see the lights of the bridges reflected in the Seine.' The thought of these lights twinkling down into the river soothed my disquiet ; there was some association, I suppose, between the fear of fire and the antidote of water ; my mother had a genius for inventing antidotes ; she was wholly unaware of her own insight into child psychology ; she called it 'distracting his attention'. But the fear remained.

On the third morning we left by the day train. I can remember only that we were provided with

sandwiches which made me ill. These sandwiches remained for long in my memory as something brown and crusted and sinister. It was dark when we arrived at the Gare de l'Est.

My aunt came to meet us and stood there on the platform, detached (she was always detached), slim (she was always slim) and stately. She wore a black seal-skin bonnet with a seal-skin gorget tight around her throat. Behind her waited two footmen in fawn-coloured greatcoats which reached almost to the ankles; imparting thereby a tubular appearance to the footmen, as if they had been Mr., or indeed Mrs., Noah. My aunt, my mother and myself were conducted towards the brougham. It was the second footman who, with the aid of the chancery servant, occupied himself with the luggage, with my mother's maid, and with Miss Plimsoll. For them a covered brake had been provided; it was known as the '*fourgon*'. Miss Plimsoll, when she eventually rejoined me at the Embassy, displayed all the familiar symptoms of recently imparted humiliation; she had not relished her relegation to the *fourgon*; she referred to it slightly as 'that black hearse'.

The brougham, as all broughams, smelt faintly of camphorated cloth; the feet of the horses clopped loudly on the paving stones and the rubber tyres of the carriage echoed their rhythm with muffled bumps. I was myself listening for the 'Boum und Krach' of the first shell. I tugged at my mother's sleeve. 'Mummy,' I pleaded in a hot whisper, 'shall we see the bridges and the river?' My mother hesitated. She knew (she always knew) that this was not a whim on my part but was connected in some manner with

a hidden fear. Yet she also knew that the station and the Embassy were both on the right bank of the river, and that to cross the bridges would entail a circuit which would be difficult to explain. She was sensitive about her children; and with her deep devotion to her sister there mingled an abiding sense of awe; for my aunt was seventeen years her senior.

‘Lal,’ she began, a trifle nervously, ‘could we possibly go round by the bridges? It is so long since I have seen the lights in the river. I feel all cooped up after that long journey.’

My aunt appeared surprised. ‘But of course,’ she murmured, and pulled the cord which was attached (offensively, I now feel) to the coachman’s elbow. The brougham stopped and the footman descended. My aunt explained. And thus we crossed by the Pont au Change and returned by the Concorde. I saw the lights twisting downwards; corkscrewing into dark waters. My apprehension, for the moment, was allayed. And to this day when I see those lights, they suggest to me—not the wide and so often illusive adventure of Paris—but the smell of camphor and the feel of my mother’s puffed brocaded sleeve against my cheek.

How intermittent and how relative are our childhood memories! We imagine idly that the texture of those memories is continuous and uniform, yet when we examine the actual patterns of our recollection, when we compare those patterns with the evidence of people older than ourselves, we find that the warp of our experience is but a dun monochrome and that it is against a background of forgetfulness

that our detached impressions are embroidered in patches of living colour. Some object (it may be a birthday present or no more than a door handle) remains vividly in our minds and we suppose that this object did in fact represent a centre of excited experience lasting over several months. 'How well I remember,' I would say, 'that yellow caravan which I was given for Christmas! Never have I loved any object as I loved that caravan.' 'But no!' my mother would object, 'you never really cared for toys. I remember that caravan perfectly. It was given you by dear old Princess Dolgorouki. But you never cared for it yourself. What you really cared for was playing with pieces of string. And when we left Constantinople we gave the caravan to the cook's little boy. You never missed it.'

In my own memories, none the less, I can certainly detect a wire thread of continuity, a recurrent metal motif. That motif was the motif of fear. Again and again do I discover, when some patch of past experience becomes, for no particular reason, vividly active in my mind, that this experience was connected with, or coloured by, some association of fear. Those few spring days in Paris in 1892 are vivid to me in their slightest detail since during the whole of that time I was constantly on the alert for the first sound of the impending bombardment. Walmer again is alive to me since behind every bastion there lurked the, to me, giant ghost of the Duke of Wellington (to say nothing of that of Mr. Pitt) prepared to stalk with frowning but determined silence in pursuit of the fleeing feet of little boys. The love and laughter of those days have sunk to a dim oblivion; the inci-

dents of that life are faded and outworn ; yet the successive terrors which tortured my imagination throughout my childhood still possess the power to illumine all associated experience with the precision of some giant microscope.

‘ Surely,’ I asked my mother recently, ‘ I must have been a very nervous child ? ’ ”

‘ Nervous ? ’ she repeated, puzzled—‘ but you were always doing such dangerous things. You remember when you jumped along the battlements at Walmer ? And you were so cheerful. Of course you had strange ideas. I remember once at Whitby you were convinced that the wind was searching for you personally, even in the chimney, even in your little bed, and that it was determined to tear you limb from limb and cast you to the seas. You were afraid in an odd way of your name. You said to me once “ Mummy, I like my name when I hear other people say it, but when I say ‘ Harold ’ to myself it makes me feel afraid.” Of course nowadays with all this psychology nonsense we should have thought that important. At the time, we thought it very funny. I used to tell people that you said very clever and original things. We always took you for granted. But we were rather worried about your being so frightened at night. Your father once consulted a doctor about it. The doctor said that you would get over it when you went to school.’

I did not get over it.

(3)

My first of many Parisian episodes was the episode of the balloon. In those days (such was the lavish

generosity of M. Chauchard) the children of customers who visited the Magasin du Louvre were presented with large balloons bearing upon their elastic encasement an enormous cock, pink and Gallic. I was delighted at receiving this balloon and returned to the Embassy clasp ing in an excited hand the white string at the other end of which my huge balloon tugged and bounded. So warm was my emotion, so volatile was the balloon, so evasive was the string that held it, that on reaching the hall of the Embassy the string slipped through my heated hand and the balloon rose slowly to the very point where the centre of the ceiling dominated that sweep of staircase. The balustrade of this staircase was graced at intervals by medallions of the Roi Soleil in a series of golden sunbursts. My balloon bumped impudently two or three times against the ceiling and then came to obstinate and aspirative rest. Its string dangled umbilical and shaming.

I was distressed at the momentary loss of my balloon and was glad to observe that Miss Plimsoll took the situation with fitting seriousness. She summoned the footmen who were lounging in the outer hall. 'Garçons,' she exclaimed, 'viens ici.' Although somewhat startled by this anglican method of approach, the footmen advanced with powdered dignity towards the well of the staircase. Miss Plimsoll pointed upwards. On observing my balloon resting in the very centre of the ceiling their calm gave place to agitation. They summoned Mr. Nowell, who, ever since those distant Ottawa and Calcutta days, had acted as steward to my uncle. Mr. Nowell (a forcibly bearded man in the style of Parnell) was

shocked by my balloon. He instructed the footmen to bring a broom. No Embassy broom was long enough. In a frenzy of anxiety, the footmen tied two Embassy brooms together with a duster and protruded this wobbly enemy towards my Gallic cock. The latter still remained unreachable. Mr. Nowell himself became perturbed. 'I only hope,' he said, 'that His Excellency does not emerge.' Miss Plimsoll, gazing upwards, displayed trepidation. A mood of general panic descended upon the rescue squad.

I stood there on the black and white marble pavement of the hall tortured with anxiety in regard to my balloon and conduct. Had I once again done something wrong? I began to whimper slightly. Miss Plimsoll flicked at me sideways—a mere side-flash of chilblained fingers—while her little nose remained fixed upon the ceiling.

It was at that stage that Mr. Nowell had a bright idea. He retired for some minutes into his own apartments and then returned with stiff paper darts fitted at the end with pins. With malevolent dignity he himself, from the strategic position of the upper landing, directed these darts against my balloon. At the third attempt (and I can still see the footmen running down the staircase with their aiglets dancing in front of them in order to retrieve his first two failures) my balloon popped slightly and then restricted itself to the sudden shape of a snake's slough; rapidly, with its attendant cord, it fell to earth. It lay there, upon the black and white squares of the vestibule, with the string appearing disproportionately umbilical and long. My cries of rage and sorrow

echoed throughout the Faubourg St. Honoré and beyond.

‘Hush, dear,’ said Miss Plimsoll, ‘you have been very naughty.’

There was a toy-shop in those days at the corner of the Rue de Rivoli and the Rue de Castiglione. It contained, among many other objects, a harlequin in diamond-patterned satin, whose eyes and hands moved rhythmically. I loved that harlequin. I was given instead a pegtop with a little whip with which to beat it. It was evident from the first that my elders imagined that from this pegtop I would derive both movement and pleasure. Even my aunt accompanied Miss Plimsoll and myself down to the garden gate which gave upon the Champs Elysées. In an orgy of flagellation I struck that pegtop with my little whip. They had omitted to tell me that some initial process of giration was necessary before any pegtop would consent to be whipped. It seemed to me a rotund and withal inert object which persisted in remaining recumbent. Miss Plimsoll, although disapproving of my failure, was herself equally incompetent. The pegtop was anything but a success. It was from that moment that I derived the sad theory that I was bad at games.

This was not the only object which I acquired from the toy-shop. I had also bought a telephone. It consisted of two cardboard ear-pieces shaped like those cones which serve as drinking flasks in American trains. These cones were connected with each other by a length of strong cotton encircling a neat little cardboard winder. The larger end of the two cones was closed by a taut tendon of parchment; and it



was a fact that when one extended the cotton to its greatest length and whispered hotly into one of the cones a faint susurrations could be detected at the other end. I forced Miss Plimsoll to stand at the remotest corner of the passage and to pull the cotton taut. 'Miss Plimsoll!' I hissed loudly, 'can you hear me?' 'Yes, dear,' she answered, and a faint tickling in the diaphragm of my own cone convinced me that her reply had in fact been telephonic.

It may well have been this infant interest in a rapidly developing invention that attracted to me the kind approval of Mr. Nowell. He ceased to be the Olympian dart-gatherer and became a kind person in a beard and one who was much interested in pioneer children. He showed me Pauline Borghese's bed, which at the time affected me but little. He adopted towards it a proprietary air. 'That,' he said, 'is the best thing we have in the house.' Miss Plimsoll said '*Really*, Mr. Nowell.' But to me, the bed of Pauline Borghese was nothing more than a heap of stuff.

Mr. Nowell observed my indifference. 'And now,' he said, 'I shall show you something *really* interesting.' He led us out from the main doorway, across the then cobbled courtyard, and across the street towards the stables, which were then, as now, situated in the Rue d'Anjou. There were many carriages of diverse shape in the stables, including a state coach. Mr. Nowell, with his vice-regal manner, conducted us towards a little brougham. 'This,' he said, 'is His Excellency's personal carriage'—and as he said these words he fiddled inside that small compartment and in a second the green leather interior was illumined by a dim bulb in the roof. 'This,' he

pronounced in expository triumph, 'is His Excellency's electric light.' And then he explained how, when driving from the Quai d'Orsay or to the Spanish Embassy my uncle would beguile his traverse by reading Greek and Persian poets under that dim and ineffective bulb. It seemed to me the acme of modernity. My own telephone receded into a barbaric and incompetent past. My uncle ceased to be a gentleman who called my mother 'Dearest Katie' and became a gentleman whose brougham contained within its own recesses that marvel of modern ingenuity, the electric light. I was much impressed.

Mr. Nowell was not unconscious of the effect that he had created. Miss Plimsoll had gasped. She had said these words 'Had one not seen it, Mr. Nowell, one would not have believed it'. Mr. Nowell accepted her admiration as something which was not only charming, but well deserved.

So he showed us the Benjamin Constant.

(4)

I can still recall our progress towards that famous picture. We left the stables. Mr. Nowell—superb yet adequately servient—conducted Miss Plimsoll with chivalry across the street and back to the steps which led to the front door. He ascended the staircase with attentive condescension. Miss Plimsoll tripped behind. He conducted us into the ante-room which was upholstered in yellow silk. Against a canopy in that ante-room was propped the Benjamin Constant preparatory to its removal for exhibition at the Salon. Mr. Nowell presented us to the portrait with a wave of his hand.

I ran towards the picture and scrutinised it closely. 'No! No!' said Mr. Nowell, 'you must not look at it as close as that.' He came and stood beside me and then he retreated slowly. Having reached the requisite distance, he leant backwards and inclined his head on one side. Miss Plimsoll tripped across the Aubusson until she had rejoined him. She also cocked her little head sideways. '*That*,' said Mr. Nowell, 'is the way in which one should look at pictures.'

Obediently, I trotted back across the Aubusson towards the required position. I also cocked my head sideways. The portrait was in fact resplendent. '*Beautiful*,' gasped Miss Plimsoll, 'perfectly beautiful.'

I also realised that it was something very grand.

In later years I have examined that portrait with a more critical eye. My uncle is depicted sitting defiantly in a chair with a dim curtain descending behind his left shoulder. He is dressed in the robes of an English peer slashed with alternate bands of scarlet and white fur. Around his neck and shoulders are negligently draped the chains of the Star of India, the St. Patrick, the Indian Empire and the Bath. He wears a stiff collar and a white hunting tie. His right hand (which was large and brown) rests upon the inner side of his thigh and assumes that conformation which in subsequent years became so familiar to me. Owing to some quirk of gout or rheumatism, he had acquired the habit of flexing the little finger and the fourth finger while keeping the index and the middle finger outstretched. There was something papal about this carriage of his fingers.

The left hand is clasped in uncharacteristic defiance upon the arm of his chair. His knees, and the fur

and velvet about them, are very clumsily composed. Yet when in after years I came to consider that portrait, it seemed to me that it was in regard to the face of my uncle that M. Benjamin Constant had shown how incompetent a portraitist he really was.

Not that the features were in themselves ill-rendered. M. Constant had accurately reproduced the fine forehead, the frank determined eyes, the white hair curled back again to sweep forward above the ears, the waxed moustache, that careful beard. Yet M. Constant had failed to grasp my uncle's personality. He had given no hint of the Irish side, that side of him which was amused even at its own splendour. He had omitted his ambient gaiety even as he had ignored his generosity of soul. And he had failed utterly to suggest the fact that my uncle, in spite of many florid and in fact flamboyant facets in his character, was essentially a patrician. The Constant portrait is a portrait of a successful but most ill-bred man. It is not the portrait of a man of unusual fastidiousness, sensibility and wit.

Miss Plimsoll, for her part, loved the picture. 'It is,' she murmured softly, 'what people call a speaking likeness. You know what I mean, Mr. Nowell?'

'Yes,' answered Mr. Nowell, 'it is certainly a portrait of which His Excellency—and mark you he knows about painting—definitely approves.'

It was at that moment that Mr. Horace Devine, the third secretary at the Embassy, passed through the ante-room on his way to the Ambassador's study. Mr. Devine actually shone with elegance, the glitter of his black hair being echoed by the twinkle of his

little shoes. He cast a supercilious glance at us as he hurried through the yellow ante-room into the blue drawing room beyond. We were still standing there—Mr. Nowell, Miss Plimsoll and myself—when he returned. This time he flashed a smile at us, a smile so dazzling in its whiteness that it made me jump.

‘Halloo, Nowell,’ he laughed over his shoulder, ‘admiring the daub?’

And at that he hurried down the staircase, two wide steps at a time. Mr. Nowell inclined his head silently in a dismissive bow.

‘Miss Plimsoll,’ I asked when I was taken up to wash, ‘what is a daub?’

‘That,’ she answered, ‘was one of the Attachés.’

(5)

Miss Plimsoll, at that date, had been my governess for over two years. Her former post was with the family of a naval gentleman and throughout her life with us her standards of thought and conduct remained of the marine variety. My own father was in the diplomatic service and at the time was Agent and Consul-General in Hungary. Miss Plimsoll, although she treated him with unfailing courtesy, regarded him in her heart of hearts, not only as a land-lubber, but as a renegade among land-lubbers. Stung to emulation by her stories of Captain Antrobus, and that dance upon—(‘No, dear, only land-lubbers say “upon” or “on”—you should say “in”, dear.’)—in the *Indefatigable* at Malta, I had boasted that my father also had been in the navy and that, what was more, my grandfather was an Admiral. ‘On what station, dear?’ ‘What *what*, Miss Plimsoll?’ ‘Station,

dear, by which I mean where did he hoist his flag ? ' I was unaware that either my father or my grandfather had ever hoisted any flag. So one day at luncheon she asked my father himself. The awful truth was then disclosed. I had been correct in saying that my father had once been in the navy, but he had hurriedly abandoned that profession as soon as opportunity offered, in fact upon leaving the *Britannia*. True it was also that my grandfather was an admiral, but evidently he was not a very good admiral, since all that he commanded was the Thames Conservancy Board. I do not say that Miss Plimsoll sniffed on hearing these disclosures ; she received them with that polite, if somewhat resigned interest, which Sven Hedin might accord to the narration of a young bride's journey to Kashmir. The naval careers, both of my father and my grandfather, were, I thereafter realised, not quite of first-class stuff. Miss Plimsoll's daydreams continued to centre around Captain Antrobus and happy picnics to Marsamuscatto Bay.

I observed, none the less, that the splendour of the Paris Embassy, the glamour of my uncle's prestige, the authoritative suavity of Mr. Nowell, combined to occasion a slight faltering in her contempt for all civilians. Our own little house in the Andrásy Ut at Buda Pesth could never hope to compete with the romance of Valetta Harbour or the gangway of H.M.S. *Indefatigable*. The house in the Rue de Faubourg St. Honoré was undeniably different. ' It is,' Miss Plimsoll remarked when I first showed her the ballroom, ' it is like a *palace*, dear, isn't it ? ' I answered that indeed it was. She was clearly impressed by the fact that there were two separate dining-rooms on two

separate floors ; a small room when one was more or less alone ; an enormous room when one had fifty people to dinner. ‘ Fifty people to dinner . . . ’ she murmured to herself, making comparative calculations of the size of the Captain’s cabin in the *Indefatigable*. Yet what finally decided her that at least the higher ranks of the Diplomatic Service were less dowdy than she had supposed was her discovery, while we were waiting for the carriage in the outer hall, of The Book.

As at most Embassies, a book was kept upon a table in the hall in which British subjects could, if they desired to do anything so senseless, write their names. It was a large book, bound in red morocco and stamped with the royal arms in gold. It stood upon a marble console and was accompanied by a silver inkstand, a clean sheet of blotting paper, and three very neat pens. On each side of the console stood two Burmese idols. Miss Plimsoll adored that book. It exercised upon her a quadruple fascination ; in the first place it suggested something royal, nay imperial ; in the second place it often contained the signatures of people whose names she had read in the newspapers ; in the third place it was a barometer of deference or popularity—(‘ Look, dear ! nearly a whole page of names since this morning, I do declare ! ’) ; and in the fourth place, whereas other British subjects signed this book, she, Edith Plimsoll, did not. And why not ? Because she, unlike all those other people, was a guest in the house.

The impression made upon her by this volume was evidenced two years later when my father was appointed Minister at Tangier. He told us the news at breakfast. ‘ How truly wonderful,’ Miss Plimsoll cried;

‘and shall we have A Book?’ My father was perplexed by this question, and Miss Plimsoll was obliged to explain. ‘No,’ he answered, a little grimly perhaps, — ‘not if I can help it.’ Miss Plimsoll could ill conceal her disappointment.

What with The Book, and Mr. Nowell and the Benjamin Constant and the tiger skins upon the white and black squares of the hall; what with the portrait of the dear Queen in the ball-room and all those rows of little gilt chairs; what with the royal arms on the porte cochère and the resplendent carriages which crackled on the cobbles of the forecourt; what with the long hoses upon wheels with which several gardeners at a time would give to the lawn that ‘almost English look’; what with the gendarmes at the gate who saluted my uncle when we all walked across to morning service in the rue d’Aguesseau; what with the large Embassy pew in the large Embassy church which was not like a pew at all but like the Royal Box at Drury Lane; and what, oh, above all! with that winning bow which Lord Dufferin would make to her at breakfast;—Miss Plimsoll, during those traitor days in Paris, found herself thinking less and less about sub-lieutenants and more and more about the glories of Ambassadors. I welcomed this conversion with ardour. Not only did it relieve me of the strain of naval standards, but it reflected marked credit upon my uncle, and thus indirectly upon myself. My heart swelled with pride and affection at the thought that Miss Plimsoll (in general so averse from civilians) should have been captivated by my uncle’s magnificence and charm. I came to regard him as a most important man.



That evening, when I went to my mother's room after tea, I told her about it. 'Mummy,' I said, 'Miss Plimsoll likes Uncle Dufferin *awfully*.' 'Does she, darling?' my mother answered, not seeming to attach to the point the importance which it deserved. I was hurt by the lack of warmth with which she received my news. 'Yes, *awfully*,' I repeated, crestfallen. My mother paid no attention. She was trying to find the place in the book where she had stopped reading aloud to me on the previous evening. She found it. 'Here it is!' she said, and then she put on her reading-aloud voice and began:—'The three elder ones that afternoon had arranged a pleasant picnic behind the old mill. Bessie, for she was growing quite a big girl, was allowed to carry the smaller basket. When they reached the mill . . .'

There was a knock at the door and my uncle entered. He carried some papers in his hand, and he said: 'Is it very naughty of me to interrupt? I just want to show you these, Katie. They are the proofs of my dear mother's poems which I am editing. It will make a pretty volume.' My mother took the papers and began turning over the sheets slowly. My uncle drew up a footstool close to me and said: 'Well, young man?' There was a distinct pause. I knew I ought to say something. 'Uncle Dufferin,' I piped, 'Miss Plimsoll says she likes you *awfully*.' He was already a trifle deaf, and bent down with his hand to his ear. 'Miss *who*?' he asked. 'Miss Plimsoll,' I shouted. My mother glanced up hurriedly from the proofs she was reading, with a look of anxiety upon her face. 'He means his governess,' she smiled. 'Does she indeed?' my uncle answered. 'She must be a most

*gracious* lady!’ I had not, as yet, thought of Miss Plimsoll in exactly those terms. And in this way she, also (although but for a little while) rose in my estimation.

## (6)

There was an official dinner, that evening, at the Embassy. It was followed by a reception. My mother managed to slip away for an instant in order to kiss me good-night. I clung so passionately to her that she realised that something was troubling me. ‘What is it?’ she said, ‘is there something wrong?’ It is only in the half-light (a door half open on the corridor with a pink shaded lamp outside) that children will confess their terrors. I told her about the impending bombardment. She was wise; she knew that it would be but slight comfort to me to be assured that it had all happened twenty-two years ago and was unlikely, that evening, to occur again. She said, ‘But you see the Embassy is British territory. It is as if we were in England. No cannon could touch us here.’

I was assuaged by this magnificent evasion. She left me comforted but alert. I leapt out of bed and went to the window. My room gave upon the courtyard and by kneeling on a chair I could see across to the porte cochère, under which a slow and jingling procession of carriages was passing in. Carriage after carriage fronted me with two lamp-lit eyes, and then blinked sideways as it turned upon the cobbles of the courtyard. When the carriages approached the carpeted steps leading to the front door, the footman upon the box would swing downwards holding a basketed mud-guard wherewith to protect the skirts

of his mistress from any contact with the wheel. Each coachman carried a tall whip in his hand, and many whips shone with silver in the light of the lamps. I could not see the guests as they left their carriages since a glass roofing stretched over the steps between us. The Rue du Faubourg St. Honoré could be discerned under the wide arch of the porte cochère with the dark blue figures of countless gendarmes lined out to bar the street. For they were afraid at the time of some anarchist outrage. I leant far out of the window in the hopes of seeing what happened to the carriages when they passed beyond my range of vision under the projecting glass roof. Miss Plimsoll, entering silently, caught me in that position. I expected to be scolded. She said, 'You will catch cold, dear, and you will see better if you come across to my room.'

She put a shawl round my shoulders and carried me across the passage and along to where her own room looked towards the garden. The glass verandah which ran round the ballroom and the state dining-room glowed with internal light. In the deep garden beyond, the gravel of the garden paths had been marked out with little green oil lamps which fluttered in a glow-worm manner. The trees were caverns of black shadows. From the ballroom there was a sound of subdued music, and when from time to time groups of people crossed the enclosed space between the two wings, voices would rise towards us and faint laughter. Women in frilled wraps passed out along the outlined garden paths into the punctuated darkness beyond. And suddenly above the May murmur of the night a voice could be heard singing stridently.

‘That,’ said Miss Plimsoll, ‘is the Music Hall in the Champs Elysées.’ I felt warm in the wrap which Miss Plimsoll had provided for me, and there was a smell of lilac and laburnum in the air mingling with the fainter smell of chestnut trees.

The voices of the guests reached us in puffs of scented sound. Miss Plimsoll that evening was feeling lonely and expansive. She spoke about Mr. Nowell and of how kind, how *really* kind, he had been.

‘He is very worried,’ she murmured meditatively.

I was listening to that shrill voice beyond the trees : a shrill voice in the dark.

‘Yes,’ continued Miss Plimsoll, ‘he is unhappy about this engagement.’

The word meant nothing to me, but I realised that Miss Plimsoll was expecting questions.

‘Why, Miss Plimsoll?’ I asked her.

‘You would not understand, dear,’ she answered, ‘and you mustn’t say I told you. But your cousin, Lord Terence, has become engaged to an *American*.’

She stressed the last word with infinitely resigned sadness. She gazed straight in front of her to where the rounded trees were outlined against the lights thrown upwards by the Café des Ambassadeurs.

‘*To an American*,’ she repeated tragically. It was as if she had said, ‘The doctors have abandoned all hope.’

Cousin Terence, it was clear, had done something dreadful. And when, a few moments later, I was again tucked into my bed, I drifted to sleep glowing with that inner righteousness which children feel when their elders have committed some enormity of which they themselves are wholly innocent.

Poor Cousin Terence—so gay, so handsome and so kind. My dreams were interrupted by the sound of countless horses tramping all night upon the cobbles of the courtyard.

## II

### ROSES AND SPURS

Going to bed—Night fears—Seeing the table—The Embassy plate—Roses and Spurs—Their origin—The Blackwoods and the Hamiltons—Lady Alice Moore and the Will Case—Lord Dufferin's romantic temperament—The Sheridans—Dr. Thomas Sheridan the friend of Swift—Mr. Thomas Sheridan the friend of Johnson—Richard Brinsley Sheridan—Elizabeth Linley—Helen's Tower.

#### (I)

A frequent ceremony of my childhood was one which my mother called 'seeing the table'.

On ordinary evenings, having been scrubbed and brushed, I was taken down to the drawing-room and for half an hour I would play at serpents with my two pieces of string; endlessly enticing the serpent in my right hand to pursue the serpent in my left hand in and out of the pattern of a Bokhara rug. Inevitably, according to the time of year, would come that moment which I had been dreading all the day.

The step of the butler would be heard upon the flooring of the ante-room. Inexorably he would enter, bearing the lamp which fitted into the brass stand behind the sofa. He was followed by the footman carrying two smaller lamps for the side tables. The latter took the form of columns of white china which, after terminating in Corinthian capitals, gave up trying to appear Corinthian and decided to wallow into bowls of green glass in which the wick could be discerned floating in a viscous fluid. At first ap-

pearance, the lamps displayed three glow-worm points of light behind their lamp-glass. They were both menacing and denuded. The footman would leave them and retire to fetch the shades, which were kept in a white cupboard in the outer hall. During his absence the butler did the thing that I hated most. He advanced mercilessly towards the windows, pulled down the blinds against the last sad vestiges of daylight, and with a vicious twitch of the hand tugged the brocaded curtains together until their fringes kissed again after a whole day's separation. The wooden rings of the curtains emitted upon their rods a hollow note of protest like a xylophone. I then knew that daylight had left me; that night with all its hatred of me, had closed me in.

True it is that thereafter a short reprieve of comfort was accorded. The butler would take the three shades from the footman. The largest of the three was constructed of red silk, heavily flounced and fringed; it possessed scalloped bays punctuated by sharp peaks; the latter suggested the points at which a skirt-dancer would protrude her toes: one visualised the black silk stocking of some music hall performance; the butler delicately affixed this vaudeville covering upon the brass bracket which surrounded the standard lamp. The other two, which were also flounced, but in a gay pinkish material, he would drop less cautiously above the two Corinthian columns. And then he would peer under the skirts of the three shades and fussily adjust the screws which worked the wicks. Suddenly the lamps (which had seemed so cruel as warning eyes echoing through their naked glass the wider and more naked panes

of twilight windows) became robed, mellow, maternal.

‘Now, darling,’ my mother would say, ‘we can go on with our reading. Let me see; where did we get to?’ She would open the book and start reading. I would nestle close to her knee, conscious of her comforting voice and of protection; but conscious also that the clock upon the mantelpiece was moving towards that moment when she would glance up at it, close the book suddenly, and say, ‘Now, darling . . .!’ knowing all too well that the moment had arrived for that daily ordeal which each of us dreaded. There would be no plangent begging for reprieve. Numbed by the inevitable, I would enter my tumbril with heroic calm; bravely I would munch my rusk and gulp my milk; bravely endure the final wash, the slippers, the night-gown, the jaeger dressing-gown. Bravely I would say my prayers. The Lord’s Prayer, for some strange reason, was recited in German, since it was in that Lutheran style that I had first learnt it; the part which blessed my father and mother and my two brothers was said in English; but the part that prayed for personal protection was not said at all; it was breathed out to a very distant Heaven in silent concentration. Quite gaily I would leap into bed: ‘Good night, Miss Plimsoll, keep your door open in case there’s a burglar.’ ‘Good night, dear—sleep well. . . .’

The puff of Miss Plimsoll extinguishing the candle beside my bed. ‘Not shut the door, Miss Plimsoll!’ ‘Well, just a little crack, dear.’ And then the darkness closing round me like red German mattresses pressing me down into my bed. All alone in that sentient darkness except for the smell beside me of an



expiring candle ; it did not wish me well ; above and beyond all that a thin golden crack of light by the doorway. Through which Herr Geverts would creep. He would come in, quite small at first, like a piece of string ; but once inside he would swell quickly, and he would creep about the room slowly on all clumsy fours, searching for my bed in the corner, crouching beside the bed quite silently at first, waiting till I should drop off to sleep. None the less, I *knew* it was Herr Geverts, with his whiskers and his steel spectacles ;—the man who kept the sausage shop at the corner of the Andrassy Ut. Herr Geverts who had slipped into the room as a piece of string and had then become a small dog, and then a great dog, and then a wolf ; and who was now himself, only with a bear's feet and claws, crouching at the end of my bed, ready, if I slept, to get closer, ever closer, first one paw ; then another. . . .

‘ Miss Plimsoll ! ’ I would scream.

Miss Plimsoll disapproved of cowardice in little boys. True, it was that I did not disclose to her that Herr Geverts, in the semblance of a dinosaur, was sitting patiently underneath my bed. I used to make excuses to Miss Plimsoll. The best of these was the excuse, ‘ I thought I heard a tap dripping ; ’ the worst of these was the excuse, ‘ I thought I heard you call me, Miss Plimsoll ? ’

She was not taken in by these defences. She knew perfectly well what was wrong. But she was convinced, in her loyal little way, that night fears were not suitable to someone who before long would be steering H.M. battleships unflinchingly towards the very centre of the enemy batteries.

‘But, dear!’ she would say unhelpfully, ‘supposing everybody screamed like that?’

(2)

On occasions, however (as I have said), this routine was broken by the ceremony of ‘seeing the table’. Instead of opening *The Angel of Love* when the lamps came—(I can see that work of sickly sentiment before me as I write. It was bound in blue; and its outside bore a semblance of a pigeon beating against the bars of a cage)—my mother would say, ‘Now darling, we must go and see the table.’ It meant that there was to be a dinner party that evening, and that a final glance must be given at the table before my mother went up to dress. On grand occasions, there was the additional excitement of placing name-cards beside each person’s place. My mother would hold the plan of the table in her hand and I would be allowed to cope with the packet of gilt-edged cards. As she read out a name, I would search hurriedly among my cards and hand it up to her in triumph. The foreign names were very difficult to read.

Looking back to-day, I realise that the several stages in my father’s diplomatic career are symbolised by the increasing magnificence of these ceremonies. The ceremony of seeing the table at Buda Pesth is not vivid to me. I suspect that the dining-room was small and brown and that, although silver candlesticks with red shades were placed at intervals on the cloth, yet the hanging lamp with the pink glass shade still depended above them; robbing them thereby of stately ease.

At Constantinople our table ceremony reached a

higher stage. I certainly remember a large dinner set out in the summer Embassy at Therapia when the napkins ran in rows like the bishops' mitres in engravings of the Diet of Worms; and the soft Bosphorus sunset slid across the white dinner table in slatted shafts of orange and of blue. I remember also Moroccan dinner tables; the Iris Tingitana and the white broom, on such occasions, became a covert among which nestled little silver bowls for sweets. There were candied rose leaves and candied violet leaves, and sugared almonds of all colours, and crystalised cherries, and a curious sweet which consisted of two halves of a walnut sandwiching some glutinous substance. These condiments arrived half-yearly in sealed bottles from the Army and Navy stores. Madrid also, in that beautiful and inconvenient Embassy of 1905, represented an ascension towards the magnificent. The Madrid dining-room looked out upon the courtyard; and there was a smell of stables mingling, not unpleasantly, with the scent of food. The walls were of scarlet damask and between the huge royal portraits there were golden sconces for electric light which would flick and wink when some dray rumbled on the cobbles outside. Upwards again I ascend to the oval dining-room at St. Petersburg with the long supper room beyond; the picture is one of hothouse fruit and flowers upon separate tables, and mauve shades, and mouse-coloured pile, and many footmen in shirt sleeves and velvet breeches placing huge candelabra in the centre of each table; and circle upon circle of small gilt chairs.

Yet in all my experience no table has ever seemed so lavish or so grand as that which, on that May

evening in 1892, my mother showed me in Paris. It was not, on that occasion, our table; it was my uncle's table; it was my aunt's table; we crept down there hand in hand, pushing the white door furtively, advancing into the vast dining-room almost on tip-toe; almost giggling; gladly conspiratorial. Places were laid for fifty people, with twenty-five on each side. I presume that somewhere upon that table some flowers had been hidden; a tulip, here and there, may have stretched a shy head between a sphinx of silver or a hippogriff of gold; yet such flowers as there were had been allowed to blush almost unseen; the whole surface of the cloth was covered and concealed by precious metals. There was the Empire plate belonging to the Embassy; the less flamboyant Georgian from Clandeboye; a regiment of caskets in silver and enamel, in ivory and gold, which had once contained addresses of welcome from Madras or Mandalay; and vast twisted candelabra stretching thin candles into the bewildered air. Between these panoplies, hiding the last square inch of cloth, had been placed alternately a golden rose and a golden spur. These strange heraldic emblems wound in and out of the caskets, the candelabra, the mazer bowls, the épergnes and étagères of Pauline Borghese, and the reproductions of the Armagh chalice, in a sinuous chain of prickly gold. I stretched out a hand to touch and seize. I was quickly restrained.

'But what *are* they, Mummy?' I asked in pardonable perplexity.

'They belong to your Uncle Dufferin,' my mother answered, not wishing to embark upon a story which was both complicated and strange. It was only in

later years that I learnt the true origin and meaning of the spur and the rose.

To this day that story holds me entranced. Nor (since it casts a light upon my uncle's heredity and character) shall I withhold it now.

(3)

The destinies of the Blackwood and the Hamilton families (from which respectively my uncle and my aunt derived) have for the last three hundred years been curiously interlocked. The Blackwoods were the first to emigrate from Scotland, having been all too intimately identified with the fortunes of Mary Stuart. To this day a Book of Hours presented by that provocative sovereign is preserved in the Helen's Tower Library. The elder branch escaped to France and established themselves at Poitou; the last survivor of that stock died childless towards the end of the nineteenth century. The younger branch, from which Lord Dufferin was directly descended, crossed to Ulster shortly after 1586 and were granted a plantation along the Belfast Lough in the region around Bangor.

The Hamilton family (which was also of Scottish origin) was a later and, at first, a far more successful importation. James Hamilton managed to acquire considerable influence with James VI. In 1604 he was despatched across the Irish Channel with the task of 'settling' County Down. He was accorded by his sovereign a charter conveying to him all rights and title over the castles and possessions of the O'Neills situated in Upper Clandeboyne and the Great Ardes. In 1610 he acquired, somewhat unscrupulously, the

demesnes and castles of the Barony of Dufferin. He repaired and enlarged the old towers of Killyleagh, which had first been built in 1178, rendering it 'ane very strong castle: the lyk is not in the northe'. Thus entrenched, he still further increased his possessions; was created Viscount Clandeboye in 1622; obtained the monastic lands of Bangor in 1630; and died in such an odour of sanctity and power that his son and successor was in 1647 raised by Charles I to the Earldom of Clanbrassil.

Sir Walter Scott has well celebrated the mood of resentment which such acquisitiveness on the part of my Hamilton forbears must inevitably have aroused in the souls of the O'Neills. In *Rokeby* he represents the last of that great family declaiming as follows:

' Ah Clandeboye ! Thy friendly floor  
Slieve Donard's oak shall light no more ;  
The mantling brambles hide thy hearth,  
Centres of hospitable mirth,  
All undistinguished in the glade  
My sire's grand home is prostrate laid.

And now the stranger's sons enjoy  
The lovely woods of Clandeboye.'

The O'Neill hearth at Clandeboye may, or may not, have existed. For all I know it may in fact have been laid prostrate. Yet the castle of Killyleagh (where both my aunt and my mother were born) is the reverse of prostrate; it is flamboyantly upright. To this day it pricks castellated ears above the smoke of its own village and provides a curiously exotic landmark, towering like some château of the Loire above the gentle tides of Strangford Lough.

James Hamilton of Killyleagh, second Viscount Clondeboyne, and first Earl of Clanbrassil, married Lady Anne Carey, daughter of the Earl of Monmouth. He died in 1659, leaving an only son who married (most unfortunately) Lady Alice Moore, daughter of the first Earl of Drogheda. It was this determined lady who, through a direct chain of events, supplied the Embassy dinner table in Paris, upon that May evening of 1892, with a series of spurs and roses artistically devised in silver-gilt.

Lady Alice, after having been married for several years, and having had but one child who died in infancy, made two important discoveries. The first was that her husband would never again be capable of exercising his conjugal rights. The second was that her father-in-law had, at the time of his death, made a most inconvenient will. This will laid it down that in the event of his son dying without issue his whole estate would pass under entail to his five Hamilton cousins. Lady Alice was not the type of woman to accept such disinheritance with calm. She did not accept it. She did three things. In the first place she broke into the tower-room at Killyleagh where the family archives were preserved; she discovered this inconvenient will; she tore open the envelope, cast it upon the floor, and thereafter burnt its contents in her own bedroom candle. Having thus evaded the entail, she induced her husband to make a will of his own bequeathing the whole Hamilton estate to herself and her brother. In vain did the Dowager Countess warn her idiot son never to sign the will that Lady Alice was pressing upon him. 'Within three months,' she wrote to him, 'of the day that you sign that will

you will lie with your father in the vault at Bangor.' Ignoring this wise advice he signed the will which Lady Alice prepared. He then left for Dublin, and within two months he died of poison. His triumphant widow had the body disembowelled and the intestines burnt. The remains were buried, as the Countess had foreseen, in Bangor Church. And Lady Alice settled down to enjoy her inheritance, marrying within a few months a wealthy Scottish peer, Lord Bargany.

Two obstacles frustrated this enjoyment. In the first place, the Hamilton cousins were fully aware that the Clanbrassil estates had been bequeathed to them in the event of Lord Clandeboye producing no children. They filed a suit. This suit continued for two generations, during which period the estates and proceeds thereof were impounded by the court. The second obstacle was even more awkward. An over-impulsive servitor, some years after the event, when cleaning out the muniment room at Killyleagh, discovered under a shelf a sheet of paper folded in the shape of an envelope. Upon the outside of this wrapper were written the words 'Last Will and Testament of James Hamilton, second Viscount Clandeboye and First Earl of Clanbrassil'. That in itself was inconvenient enough. Yet the interior of that wrapper contained far more damaging material. It contained a full transcript of Lord Clanbrassil's will, plus his signature and confirmatory attestations. These documents were at once transmitted to the Probate Court in Dublin.

The issue was thereupon revised. A witness was discovered who was prepared to explain the whole business. He stated that when Lord Clanbrassil realised that his end was approaching, he had called for pen



and paper for the purpose of making his will. So weak and wandering was he at the moment that on signing the will he had spilled across it the inkstand upon his bed. He had then expressed himself as follows : ' This document,' he had said, ' should not be marred : let a copy thereof be made forthwith : if I am still alive I shall sign that also.'

There had not, in those days (as indeed in other days), been any surplus of paper at Killyleagh. In order to save time the duplicate of the will had been written out on the inside of the original wrapper. Lord Clanbrassil survived to sign that duplicate. Lady Alice, in her criminal haste, had discarded the wrapper. It had been found again. It was granted probate.

In the course of those years a complication had arisen. Lady Alice (fortunately for herself) had died in 1677 while the case was still in progress. The last surviving Hamilton cousin had also died. Yet before his death (confident as he was that some at least of the Clanbrassil estates would come to him) he had, for his part also, made a will. It was not a very easy will to make since he was at the time wholly unaware what he might or might not inherit. He had therefore, in a somewhat amateurish manner, banked on probabilities. He thus stated as his last will and testament that ' whatever castles, lands, tenements, mills and islands ' might eventually become his under the supposed will of Lord Clanbrassil should be divided in exactly equal halves between his daughter Anne and his nephew Gawn.

Upon the discovery of the duplicate of the Clanbrassil will, which brought the whole Hamilton estate

under its operation, the Probate Court in Dublin passed a judgment of Solomon. The dispositions, they decreed, of Hans Hamilton must be executed textually. Each property must be divided between the nephew and the daughter into exactly equal halves. They went so far as to draw a mathematical line across Killyleagh Castle itself, by which the Keep went to the nephew, whereas the courtyard and the Gate House with attendant battlements were accorded to the daughter.

Anne Hamilton's granddaughter and heiress, Dorcas, married Sir James Blackwood and brought him, not only the Killyleagh Gate House and half its courtyard, but also the site of the present Clandeboye demesne. She was created Baroness Dufferin in her own right.

The nephew, Gawn Hamilton, obtained the castle of Killyleagh but without possession of the Gate House. This strange subdivision continued throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It created much feud and friction between the Blackwoods and the Hamiltons. It was not until 1847, when my uncle Dufferin came of age, that this controversy was finally allayed. 'I will not,' he said, 'keep a man from his own front door.' He thus handed over to my Hamilton grandfather those portions of the Killyleagh estate (including the Gate House and the moiety of the courtyard) over which he himself retained a lien. He also agreed to rebuild the Gate House, and even portions of the keep, in the lavish manner of Viollet Le Duc. But in return for these romantic gestures he demanded a consideration. Inspired by memories of Walter Scott, he devised a peppercorn rent for the Gate House ;

the Hamiltons were to pay to the Lord and Lady of Clandeboyne an annual tribute in the shape of a golden rose and a golden spur each alternate year. Even when, in 1862, Lord Dufferin married the eldest daughter of the Hamiltons of Killyleagh this Wardour Street gesture of vassalage was maintained. Upon their joint dinner tables thereafter the spurs and roses entwined their metal spikes. Much spirited conversation was thereby provoked among the guests.

(4)

Lord Dufferin, as has been implied, possessed a romantic nature. To me, the feuds of the Hamiltons and the Blackwoods are as unreal as those of Montagu and Capulet. My Hamilton forebears of the seventeenth century are no more to me than dim Ulster 'undertakers'; nor do the tales of their violence and rapacity stir a single fibre of atavism in my soul. To Lord Dufferin these unreliable legends were something more than mere Border Minstrelsy. To him the fancy that in his own person and by his own marriage he had healed these ancient rivalries afforded the same satisfaction as he derived from the perusal of *Marmion*. He saw nothing incongruous in the fact that the roses and the spurs were manufactured year by year by Messrs. Elkington, even as he did not regard it as unfitting that the twelfth-century keep of Killyleagh should have been tricked out with pointed pinnacles in the manner of *Pierrefonds* or *Coucy le Château*. The infection of Sir Walter Scott had entered deep into his soul and even at the age of seventy he could admit this weakness in terms

which, to me, seem curious and, for so gifted a man, unreal :

‘ I love Sir Walter Scott,’ he wrote, ‘ with all my heart ; and, my mother excepted, I think he has done more to form my character than any other influence ; for he is the soul of purity, chivalry, respect for women and healthy religious feeling.’

It would seem indeed as if the misunderstanding that arises between the romantic and the classic temperaments is due, not so much to any conflict between imagination and reason, as to the fact that whereas the classic finds pleasure in recognition, the romantic derives his own greatest stimulus from surprise. To the classic, as to Dr. Johnson, ‘ the value of every story depends upon its being true. A story is a picture either of an individual or of human nature in general. If it is false, it is a picture of nothing.’ Yet it is not truth only which is essential if classic interest is to be durably aroused ; that truth must be ‘ recognizable ’ in the sense that it must contain a sufficient proportion of thoughts, feelings and associations analogous to those of our own modern experience. The Middle Ages, the sixteenth and even the seventeenth centuries do not provide those ‘ parallel circumstances and kindred images to which we readily conform our minds ’. Their lack of actuality, and even of reality, deprives the classic of those pleasures of recognition which he most enjoys, and leads him to regard these dim events, either as misty fantasies, or else as so remote from his own experience as to possess an archæological but not a human interest. To the romantic on the other hand, what is enjoyable is that

very sense of expanding experience occasioned by the unexpected, the unfamiliar, or the different. So far from relishing only what he can, in terms of his own experience, assess and comprehend, he derives actual pleasure from the unrecognizable. And thus, when applying himself to persons, he is equally interested in remote and unfamiliar types as in individuals the shape of whose mind and habit are akin to his own.

It is by such an interpretation of the romantic temperament that I explain to myself Lord Dufferin's fantastic preoccupation with his ruder ancestors—a preoccupation all the more inexplicable since his immediate forebears are in shape and colour as vivid as if they were alive to-day. His mother was the granddaughter of Richard Brinsley Sheridan and Elizabeth Linley. She inherited the wit of the one; the beauty of the other. And in my uncle's own veins the Sheridan blood seethed and tingled like champagne.

The Sheridans claimed that they derived from Ostar O'Sheridan, who in the early eleventh century owned Castle Togher, and whose descendants intermarried with the O'Neills, the O'Connors and the princely houses of Leitrim, Cavan, Donegal and Tyrone. I do not gather that even my uncle attached much credence to this particular legend. He was himself inclined to agree that the Sheridan family first emerged into the realms of interesting fact in the person of Thomas Sheridan, a noted Jacobite, who in 1688 accompanied James II into exile in the capacity of private secretary. The nephew of this victim of the glorious revolution was Dr. Thomas Sheridan, the friend and mentor of Swift. Dr. Sheridan was himself suspected of Jacobite tendencies and in fact lost his appointment as chaplain

to the Lord Lieutenant by preaching on the occasion of Queen Anne's birthday from the text 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof'. Towards the end of a life of consummate gaiety and confusion, he himself admitted that he 'was famous for giving the best advice and following the worst'. He was an inventive and volatile person of unquenchably high spirits and sanguine recklessness; not a day passed on which he failed to compose a madrigal, a riddle or a rebus. Dr. Swift much enjoyed bullying this convivial divine, with whom he would stay for weeks at a time at Quilca House in County Cavan. Their final quarrel arose from circumstances which indicate that Dr. Sheridan was never a man of outstanding tact. Swift, in the earlier stages of their acquaintance, had asked Dr. Sheridan to warn him should he ever display signs of avarice. Dr. Sheridan responded very warmly to this invitation. From that moment he began to take notes of every occasion on which Swift had erred in generosity. As the years passed these notes accumulated into several pages of foolscap; and one evening at Quilca House Dr. Sheridan considered that the moment had come when Swift might well be shown the results of such loyal and continuous observation. Swift read the papers and handed them back with the question, 'Did you never read *Gil Blas*?' He then returned to Dublin; and the two old friends never (it must be added to Swift's great regret) met again.

Thomas Sheridan, fourth son of this engaging clergyman, was born at Quilca in 1719. His father wished him to become a schoolmaster, but he preferred the theatre; a decision which he justified by considerable success both at Covent Garden and at Drury

Lane. He was in fact lauded by Churchill as (after Garrick) the greatest tragic actor of the London stage. His reputation rests to-day upon other claims to immortality. In the first place he was the father of Richard Brinsley Sheridan. And in the second place he constitutes an interesting problem in the life and character of Dr. Johnson.

The Sheridans, soon after their arrival in London, established themselves in a little house in Henrietta Street. To this house Dr. Johnson (who had been introduced to them by Garrick) would frequently resort. Boswell records that Sheridan's 'well-informed, animated and bustling mind never suffered conversation to stagnate; and Mrs. Sheridan was a most agreeable companion to an intellectual man'. In the intervals of declaiming at Covent Garden, Thomas Sheridan indulged in the study of what he called 'Orthœpy' and what we call 'Elocution'. So proficient did he become in this hobby that he was employed by many of the Scottish aristocrats who flocked to London during the Bute regime to teach them the correct pronunciation of the English language. One of the most prominent of these pupils was Alexander Wedderburn, subsequently Lord Chancellor and first Earl of Rosslyn. 'Although,' records Boswell, 'it was too late in life for a Caledonian to acquire the genuine English cadence, yet so successful were Mr. Wedderburn's instructors (and his own unabating endeavours), that he got rid of the coarse part of his Scotch accent, retaining only as much of "the native wood-note wild" as to mark his country: which, if any Scotchman affect to forget, I should heartily despise him.'

Thomas Sheridan used his influence with this apt pupil to obtain from Lord Bute Dr. Johnson's famous pension. Some time later, through the same agency, he secured for himself a similar pension of £200. On hearing of this, Dr. Johnson behaved with unaccustomed lack of gratitude. 'What,' he exclaimed, 'have they given *him* a pension? Then it is time for me to give up mine.'

This ungenerous remark was, we may presume, in no sense due to any human resentment of the service which Thomas Sheridan had been able to render. It was due to Dr. Johnson's distrust of orthœpy in general and his particular resentment of all endeavours to humanise the Scots. He had been extremely irritated on learning that Thomas Sheridan proposed to publish a pronouncing dictionary. 'What influence,' he thundered, 'can Mr. Sheridan have upon the language of this great country by his narrow exertions? Sir, it is burning a farthing candle at Dover to shew a light at Calais.' It is thus kinder to assume that Dr. Johnson's venom against his old friend of Henrietta Street was due to righteous anger at dogmatic interference with the natural ebb and flow of our native pronunciation. Yet the dispute became envenomed.

Someone repeated to Thomas Sheridan the remark which Johnson had made about the pension. He retaliated by forbidding the Doctor all access to Henrietta Street and by inserting in his own subsequent monograph on Swift a passage in which he refers to Johnson as a 'writer of gigantick fame in these days of little men'. This shaft went home. It was answered by a thunderbolt. 'Why, Sir,' retorted Doctor Johnson on the next occasion offered, 'Sherry is dull,



naturally dull ; but it must have taken him great pains to become what we now see him. Such an excess of stupidity, Sir, is not in Nature.'

Twenty years later, when Johnson was in his seventy-fifth year, he relented. 'Tell Mr. Sheridan,' he said to Boswell, 'that I should be glad to see him and shake hands with him.' 'It is to me,' Boswell answered, 'very wonderful that resentment should be kept up so long.' 'Why, Sir,' Johnson answered, 'it is not altogether resentment that he does not visit me ; it is partly falling out of habit—partly disgust, as one has of a drug that has made him sick. Besides, he knows that I laugh at his oratory.'

Nor was the breach ever healed.

(5)

Above the mantelpiece in the library at Clandeboyne there hangs a portrait of Richard Brinsley Sheridan. It is a cautious picture. The artist was obviously intent on concealing from posterity the more convivial aspects of the Sheridan temperament. There is no suggestion, for instance, of the man, who, when found by the watch in a condition of complete collapse, and when asked his name, hiccupped the one word 'W-W-Wilberforce'. There is no indication even of that wild liberal spirit, nor yet of 'That heart which had no hard part'. True it is that over the features of his subject the artist has cast a purple glow ; yet this coloration is conveyed with the tone-values of some pippin apple ; it implies the open-air aspect of a fox-hunting squire ; there is no hint of the candle-laden atmosphere of Brooks's, nor of the mulled claret at Carlton House, nor yet of those unending brandies

and soda with which, at late Parliamentary sittings, he would wash down Mr. Bellamy's veal pies. His right hand, with a weak gesture of affirmation, indicates some oratorical point. It is not compelling. Nor would the observer deduce from this portrait that it represented one of the kindest and most amusing men that ever lived.

Year after year I took this portrait for granted. It was to me merely the picture above the fireplace in the library. I did not connect it with those stories which, at rare intervals, I would hear my uncle relate. Still less did I connect it with the dining-room pictures, those lovely representations of Elizabeth Linley who became Sheridan's first wife.

There was the Gainsborough picture of herself and her brother Tom, which was once at Knole and which is now part of the Morgan collection in New York. There was the Romney picture entitled 'Saint Cecilia', in which Elizabeth Linley is depicted playing the organ while cherubs around her yell in cloudbursts and gleeful adoration. There was that other Gainsborough of Miss Linley sitting, her hands crossed expectantly in her lap, under an oak tree. And that other full-faced Gainsborough in which the whole wistfulness of her nature stands out so poignantly that it could arouse the chivalrous instincts even of a little boy of seven. Surely Elizabeth Linley must have been one of the loveliest women ever known. She had that consumptive colouring, that perfect proportion of lips and chin, and, above it all, that plangent lift of the eyebrows—in itself a vignette which rendered beauty limitless and undefined.

How intimately are those portraits connected with

my earlier years ! One would enter the dining-room after morning prayers filled with a desire for a purer and a fuller life coupled with a desire for breakfast. My uncle, at such moments, was at his most suave. He would address to each one of us some affectionate remark which inspired self-esteem. It was with a flash of delighted recognition that in after years I read of his own confession that his native optimism always reached its pinnacle when, having read the collect of the day, he entered the breakfast room:

‘ I always think,’ he wrote to the Duchess of Argyll, ‘ that breakfast is the pleasantest meal in the day ; my illusions in regard to my fellow creatures have reshaped themselves during the night ; and I again believe in the goodness of men and women.’

It was the tradition at Clandeboye that one’s porridge at breakfast should be consumed standing. The porridge itself was contained in a wide silver cauldron, and with a large scoop one slopped it into little round bowls bearing (I regret to say) crafty Scotch mottoes (such as ‘ Keep yer breath tae cule yer parritch ’ or ‘ There’s plenty mair in the kitchen ’) upon their rustic interiors. It was also a tradition that those of us who were of recognised Scottish ancestry should put salt into their porridge and never sugar. As I walked around the room spooning my porridge, I could look out from the plate glass windows across the falling fields and lakes, or across the river to where Helen’s Tower raised its warning finger. Or I could look back into the room upon the pictures which covered the walls, and upon that questing interrogation in the eyebrows of Miss Linley, which suggested to me that

however lavish might be the sweep of lawn and parkland, the ever undiscoverable beauty was to be sought in human reticence, unsatisfied and unallayed.

In after years I came to suspect that Miss Linley concealed behind those poignant eyebrows a rather empty brain. The plaintive lift of her thin brows (as if asking for protection, as if demanding some answer to an unanswerable enigma) has since seemed to me a disguise behind which she concealed the poverty of her own temperament. I am prepared to admit that she was an amiable woman and that at Bath and Oxford she would sing with the greatest force. Yet I suspect that Sheridan, Gainsborough and Reynolds knew in their inner minds that the divine Eliza was (in spite of her music and her verses) a person of but little depth.

These disillusion came to me in gradual stages. It was not, for instance, for many years that I grasped the fact that all these shining portraits of her were but reproductions of the original paintings which in their turn were housed at Dulwich or New York. Nor did I at first connect the library portrait with the dining-room portraits or understand that this lovely and pathetic woman bore a close relation to the man over the fireplace or that they illustrated those strange stories which my uncle would occasionally recount.

There was, for instance, the story of the elopement. A sedan chair and a curricule outside that house in the Crescent at Bath, the fantastic journey to Dunkirk, that parish priest in the village outside Calais, and the arrival of a furious Mr. Linley rescuing his daughter from a convent at Lille. There was the story also of Sheridan's two duels with Captain Matthews. The

first candle-light duel in an upper room of the Castle Tavern, Bedford Street, when he twisted the sword from Matthew's hand and forced him to plead for his life and to publish an apology. That second duel on Kingsdown near the Bath high road when Sheridan's sword was broken and Matthews stabbed him in the throat. And thereafter the calm domestic life at East Burnham and the happy congenial house in Orchard Street. And finally the death of Elizabeth Linley before general admiration could turn to pity.

With the subsequent triumphs of his great-grandfather, my uncle appeared to be less concerned. The great Warren Hastings speeches did not interest him. It was Bath and the curious singing caravan of the Linley family and the duels in London which held him entranced. In his old age he went a pilgrimage to Somerset and visited the scenes of this romance. Yet the full regency flavour of Sheridan did not in fact appeal to his Victorian taste.

The lovely face of Miss Linley looks out at me as I write these words. 'What do you know?' she seems to question, 'What do you care?' I know only that from Sheridan my uncle derived those high spirits which were the main constituent of his unforgotten charm and that from Miss Linley he derived his own swarthy beauty and that faint touch of recklessness which mingled as a delicious fire with the caution of his Ulster blood.

This was not all. Even as a little boy, I was conscious at Clandeboye of a vanished influence of great potency. From the windows, across the lakes, above the woods, Helen's Tower rose as a constant reminder of my uncle's mother. As a constant warning of the passage

of time. Even at that date the Tower had become a resort for Belfast tourists ; and there was an aspect of it which was all charabancs and ginger-beer. Yet in the house itself the Tower was mentioned only with hushed reverence. In my uncle's presence it was not referred to in ordinary tones ; if mentioned, the voice assumed a flatter and more reverential note ; even to a schoolboy, the Tower was surrounded with associations which were intangible, awe-inspiring and remote. It checked our gaiety and our excesses with the raised finger of sobriety and even painfulness. It was never an object which could be referred to lightly in the strident accents of childhood. It brooded with insistent mystery over all our escapades. It was the Tower which my eyes greeted as the steamer entered the Lough ; and it was to the Tower, when in the darkness I would sail again for England, that I flung an aching farewell.

I greet it now.

### III

#### HELEN SELINA

The Sheridan sisters—Lady Dufferin, the Duchess of Somerset and Mrs. Norton—Lady Dufferin and Lord Gifford—Anecdotes of Lady Dufferin—Her early married life—Death of Lord Dufferin's father—His Oxford career and his addiction to the Oxford Movement—Skibbereen.

#### (1)

TOM SHERIDAN, son of Richard Brinsley Sheridan by Elizabeth Linley, married Henrietta Callender and produced four sons and three amazing daughters. His eldest son eloped in circumstances of extreme romanticism with the heiress of Sir Colquhoun Grant, but degenerated thereafter into the more sedentary type of politician. He was still alive in 1888. The second son, a man of sombre beauty, contracted some mysterious illness while serving in the Embassy in Paris : he died in one of the dark little rooms across the courtyard. The three sisters, for their part, became the glory, and at times the scandal, of their age.

The eldest sister, Helen Selina, was born in 1807, married Price Blackwood in 1825, and became the mother of Lord Dufferin and the eponym of Helen's Tower. Of her there will be much to say hereafter.

The youngest sister, Jane Georgiana, married Edward Adolphus Seymour, 12th Duke of Somerset, was crowned the Queen of Beauty at the Eglinton Tournament of 1839, and thereafter remained queenly and statuesque.

The second sister, Caroline, had a less fortunate career. Gifted with something of the beauty of her sisters, with a more flashy literary talent, with a more pungent and far less agreeable wit, she lacked either the calm of the Duchess of Somerset or the serene kindness of Lady Dufferin. She was not, if we are to believe Miss Martineau, a very friendly woman. Her undoubted wrongs embittered her soul; she diluted her grievances in volume after volume of Byronic verse; the storm clouds of her life were lit by flashes of malicious brilliance or echoed to the thunder of reverberating scandals. In June of 1827 she married, most unfortunately, George Norton, brother of Lord Grantley. Mr. Norton was not an easy husband even as Mrs. Norton was not an easy wife. Their disagreement culminated in the famous divorce suit of 1836 in which Lord Melbourne was cited as co-respondent. To this day it remains uncertain whether or no this suit was engineered by Lord Wynford in the hopes of discrediting a political opponent. In any case both Lord Melbourne and Mrs. Norton emerged from the trial with their reputations comparatively unscathed. There then followed a vindictive period in which Mrs. Norton battled with her husband for the custody of her children and the possession of her own income. In her pamphlet 'English Laws for Women in the Nineteenth Century' she contended that her husband, who was himself a man of small income, impounded her own literary earnings under the Married Women's Property Act. To Mrs. Norton's fierce fight in her own interests are largely due those alleviations by which married women profited in the later nineteenth century. Yet



although, in her house in Storey's Gate, she was able to surround herself with a literary circle, of which Disraeli, Rogers, Sydney Smith and the Miss Berrys were the main ornaments, yet she was still eyed suspiciously by the more old-fashioned society. And eight years after her death George Meredith revived forgotten gossip by modelling 'Diana of the Crossways' upon the unhappy Caroline Norton and by repeating the calumny that she had betrayed to *The Times* the secret of Peel's intention to repeal the Corn Laws.

It can scarcely be questioned that the publicity which attended the wrongs of Caroline Norton threw a faint shadow over the calm distinction of the Duchess of Somerset and the gentle vivacity of Lady Dufferin. Even in the early days they seem to have suffered from the ebullience of their uncontrollable sister.

"The Sheridans," writes Frederick Lamb to Lady Cowper in 1827, 'are much admired but are strange Girls, swear and say all sorts of things to make men laugh. I am surprised so sensible a woman as Mrs. Sheridan should let them go on so. I suppose she cannot stop the old blood coming out. They are remarkably good looking and very peculiar in their looks and certainly clever.'

Frederick Lamb was a cold snob, and his criticism was coloured by sensitiveness to his own ill-breeding. But the fact remains that when Price Blackwood announced his engagement to the eldest Miss Sheridan (who was but seventeen years of age) his family expressed the strongest disapproval. He himself possessed only the pay of a naval captain out of work. Helen Sheridan had no money of her own. In order therefore to economise and to escape the frowns of his family,

he took his young bride with him to Italy. They hired apartments in the Via Maggio in Florence. And it was there, on June 21, 1826, that Frederick Hamilton Temple Blackwood, the central figure of this volume, was born.

(2)

The aura of reverence, of hushed sanctity, which to us children, thirty years after her death, hung around all that was connected with the name of Helen Selina, Lady Dufferin, was due, I suppose, to the survival of that almost legendary love which existed between her and her son. It does not appear that she was ever exaggeratedly devoted to her husband. For long stretches of time he was absent with his frigate at the Cape or off the Amazon, nor does he himself seem to have been a man of any outstanding personality. He survives only as a small thin figure, prematurely grey; and he died when my Uncle Dufferin was only fifteen years of age.

'I do not suppose,' her son wrote of Helen Selina many years later, 'that there was ever a human being who had such a power of loving.' He refers also to her 'passionate ecstasy of affection' and to that gift of self-sacrifice which enabled her to surrender everything to those she loved. Immeasurable was the devotion which she lavished on her only child for over forty years.

She must indeed have been a remarkable woman. Lovely, as only the Linleys could be lovely, she combined the splendour of her sister Georgiana, the vivacity of her sister Caroline, with a gentle wisdom

that was all her own. Her letters, under their gay Sheridan sparkle, are serious and wise ; her religious faith was tolerant but powerful ; her love of Nature was no fashionable artifice, but a secret which she hid from the world with tender reticence, disclosing it only in sudden impulses of exhilaration, or by flashes of acute and curiously detailed insight. Her songs and poems, which were almost disregarded at the time, are closer to poetry than any of the plangent Byronics of Caroline Norton ; and 'The Irish Emigrant' at least will survive long after 'The Sorrows of Rosalie' have been expunged from literary histories. Alone of the Sheridan sisters, Helen Selina was modest, unselfish and calm. 'Georgy's the beauty,' she said to Disraeli, 'and Carry's the wit, and I ought to be the good one, but I am not.' Yet in fact, throughout her life, she remained unfalteringly virtuous.

It cannot have been easy. She was an expansive woman who enjoyed the pleasure of society and the amenity of riches. She was only eighteen when her son was born, and she became a widow at an age when her charm and beauty were undiminished. She could have married many of the most gifted and impressive figures of her day. Her name, at one time, was coupled with that of Benjamin Disraeli. In after years there were those, even, who suggested that Lord Dufferin, with his long hair, with his swarthy Spanish complexion, with his small stature, with his insinuating charm, with his florid propensities, must in fact be the son of Benjamin Disraeli. This particular legend is not tenable : in his own diary Disraeli has recorded the exact date of his first meeting with Lady

Dufferin : and on that date her only child was already six years old.

One curious and pathetic romance did, none the less, entwine itself among the thorns of her self-sacrifice. During the period in which, as a young widow, she was wintering with the Duchess of Somerset in Italy—(Rome, and those camellia pots against the sweep of Castellamare)—she became acquainted with a Cambridge undergraduate of eighteen years of age. He would come up to her apartment, he would sit upon the terrace, telling her how misunderstood he was by his own father ; how he had never managed, somehow, to achieve easy fellowship with his contemporaries at Cambridge ; how much he disliked the tutor whom his father had imposed upon him during this Italian journey. Lord Gifford was a shy, persecuted, diffident, nervous but not unintelligent young man. Lady Dufferin was quick to perceive that he was the victim of parental circumstance. She gave him her sympathy and her mellowed advice. She treated this shy and gawky schoolboy with mature amusement and maternal solicitude. He responded to her kindness in a most embarrassing manner : he fell deeply in love. Lady Dufferin assumed (as most decent widows would assume) that this was but the calf-love of a man little older than her own son. Lord Dufferin himself became intimate with Lord Gifford and would sail dangerously with him in the Bay of Naples. Yet even when Lord Gifford attained his majority, even when he emancipated himself from the immediate tyranny of his father, even when he had to some slight extent conquered his own sense of inadequacy, his passion for Lady Dufferin remained

unabated. He flung himself into the management of his father's estates ; he entered Parliament ; he served on Committees ; he became not only adult but middle aged ; yet still his passion for Lady Dufferin, the mother of his own contemporary, remained the central fire of his life. He proposed to her again at the age of thirty-two : she begged him to dismiss from his mind so unsuitable a fantasy. At thirty-seven he again pressed his ardour upon her. It would have been inhuman in a woman of her age to ignore such constancy. She allowed him to believe that were her own son, the centre of her life, himself to marry, she might consider abandoning the long and joyful ordeal of a maternal widow. Lord Gifford waited ; gawky, efficient, adoring and prepossessed. At last, in 1862, Lord Dufferin married. The moment for which, for twenty years, he had been waiting appeared to have arrived. Yet in that very year, at Castle Gifford, he had a slight accident which at the moment he ignored. Internal agonies developed ; and he went to London to consult a specialist. They told him that it was little more than acute muscular strain. They then told him that there was an internal lesion beyond the resources of their skill ; that he was doomed to die. He confessed to Lady Dufferin. With that fine scrupulousness of the Victorian epoch she first ascertained from his doctors that there was small chance of his recovery and no chance whatsoever of his producing an heir. She then consented to marry him ; and his aching frame was transported to her own bright house in Highgate. They were married in the bedroom. The letter which, on that occasion, she wrote to her enraged father-in-law, Lord Tweeddale, is a

masterpiece of dignity. Eight weeks later, Gifford died.

Lady Dufferin lies buried beside him in the churchyard of Friern Barnet.

(3)

My own childhood impressions of Helen Lady Dufferin, although awestruck, were somewhat confused. There was the picture of the three Sheridan sisters in the act of decorating an urn with wreaths of flowers; even in those days I did not regard it as a good picture. There was a chalk drawing in the ante-room of a lovely widow in a lace cap, which I knew to be the portrait of my uncle's mother. There was a volume of her collected poems and verses, bound in light green and stamped with countless coronets in gold. There was the whole hushed tradition of some great bereavement associated with Helen's Tower. And there were occasions when visiting ladies would sing 'The Irish Emigrant' in the saloon, and my uncle would cover his eyes with his hand.

Yet there were also, as I have said, elements of confusion. I was much impressed, for instance, by a story which my uncle told me of how his mother had 'for the space of one hour' watched Napoleon walking in the garden. He looked immensely stout and was wearing a huge straw hat. At the time this story presented few difficulties, since I took it for granted that on one occasion Napoleon had come to stay at Clandeboye, much as Mr. Herbert Gladstone was then doing, or Lord Londonderry. It was only at a later stage that I came to examine this legend in a

more critical spirit. Obviously, I argued, it cannot have been Napoleon I who came to Clandeboye and it must have been Napoleon III. Yet it seemed unlikely that my uncle should have regarded this memory of his mother's as a striking link with the past, since he had himself known Napoleon III intimately from the day when he had first seen him, leaning sullen and mysterious against the mantelpieces of Gore House. Yet if it was in fact Napoleon I whom Helen Lady Dufferin had stared at in the garden, neither the dates nor the locality could be very clear. At the time of Waterloo she can only have been seven years old, and even supposing (which seemed unlikely) that she had crossed to Paris during the hundred days, I could scarcely believe that Napoleon wore a straw hat at Malmaison or that any little English girl, even Sheridan's grand-daughter, would have been allowed to stare at him for the space of an hour. It is only recently that I have solved this mystery. Tom Sheridan was appointed Colonial Treasurer of the Cape of Good Hope and died there in 1817. On the return journey his widow and fatherless children stopped at St. Helena. The garden, therefore, was the garden at Longwood; Helen Sheridan must at the time have been ten years old; and both the corpulence and the straw hat are abundantly confirmed from other sources. I was pleased when I established the authenticity of this legend.

Another source of confusion was the occasional appearance, among the coronets and armorial bearings (with which my uncle, in his feudal manner, used to sprinkle walls, ceilings, windows, cushions and visitors' albums) of the name and cipher of a Countess of

Gifford. I asked my mother who this lady might be. The Helen's Tower expression of reverent sadness spread over her face. 'She was your uncle's mother,' I was told, but in a tone which indicated mystery and concealment. As I grew older, I realized that, to my uncle, his mother's second marriage had come as a lasting shock. It was not that he disapproved of Lord Gifford since he has dedicated to his memory as warm a tribute as any man could desire. It can scarcely have been jealousy, since he himself had dissolved that passionate partnership with his mother by marrying in the same year. It was his undue sensitiveness to public opinion, his fastidious dread of ridicule, which led him to feel that his mother's romantic marriage to a man so much younger than herself might arouse amused comment in society. It was torture to him to feel that the gnats of malice might buzz even for a moment above that sainted head. And we were all aware, as we grew older, that the heroine of Helen's Tower must not (except with the reticence of some secret misfortune) be associated with any second marriage. This mystery enhanced the religious awe with which her memory was preserved.

I have often felt that the quality which rendered this devotion between a son and a mother so distinctive and so durable was that they were able to fuse the Victorian dogmas of parental discipline and filial piety with a twentieth-century sense of companionship. A hundred years ago it must indeed have been rare to find as between any child or any parent such unstinted confidence, such actual gaiety of communion. She shared his every interest and his every pleasure; she shared his friendships and his adventures; they



enhanced each other's merriment and inspired each other's wit. On one occasion, when some friend commented upon this exceptional companionship, Lord Dufferin looked surprised for a moment and then smiled his slow, his almost silken, smile.

'But you see,' he answered, 'my mother and I were young together in the reign of George IV. We shared our youth.'

For in fact, when Lord Dufferin was born in June of 1826 his mother was scarcely more than eighteen years of age.

(4)

Sixty-four years later, when Ambassador in Rome, Lord Dufferin made successive pilgrimages to the sites associated with his mother's early married life and with his own infancy. He was unable to identify the house in the Via Maggio where he had been born. At Siena, to which his parents had moved directly after the confinement, he was more successful. 'I was able,' he records, 'to walk straight to the Casa Gigli. I seemed to see my father and my mother when they first arrived in the dull little mediæval town walking up the little stone staircase to take possession of the first house they ever inhabited together.'

An even more evocative visit was to Barberino di Mugello, a small castle in the Appenines which they had taken for September and October of 1826. 'At first,' he records, 'the people in Florence would not admit that there was such a place; but luckily I found in the hotel a waiter who had come from thence. I accordingly started by myself on a beautiful summer's

afternoon, and having gone about an hour and a half by railway, I got an open carriage and drove about seven miles to a little old-fashioned town in a lovely cultivated valley and surrounded by hills. Beyond the town, on a little monticule, there stood the castle—such a dear old place, half castle and half house—with ruined towers, a portcullis, a courtyard, a little chapel and everything befitting. My soul was filled with delight for I conceived my mother, still a girl, looking out of the windows, pacing the garden or walking up the steep ascent, so proud and so happy with her baby in her arms, she herself being almost still a child.’

After two years in Italy, Captain Price Blackwood was in 1828 forgiven by his family, and they returned to England. They rented a small cottage at Thames Ditton. ‘It was,’ Lord Dufferin recorded, ‘while living in this little cottage in Ditton that my first recollection of my mother fixed itself for all time in my memory as her loving, radiant face, which was my childhood’s Heaven, as indeed it never ceased to be, bent over my cradle. It was also here that I celebrated my mother’s “coming of age” by nearly poisoning myself with some laburnum seeds. It is not every son that can remember his mother’s twenty-first birthday ; but my discomfort and my mother’s subsequent reproaches for having disturbed the serenity of so august a celebration impressed the date upon my memory.’

A summons reached them to visit Uncle James, Lord Dufferin, at Clandeboye. It was with some trepidation that Helen Blackwood first saw the house which was to be her home. The road, in those days, swung to the right across the river and then climbed

the short hill to where a cold Georgian portico fronted a gaunt grey house. The fields around (where to-day the heavy woods sweep downwards towards the lakes or upwards to Helen's Tower) were then denuded. Low, white-washed walls tumbled across these fields ; and the prospect from the drawing-room windows was saddened by the sight of many unpropitious farms. Her half-sister-in-law, Mrs. Hamilton Ward, who long survived her own generation, recalled the first arrival of this girl-bride in the grim hall of Clandeboye and in the midst of relations all too ready to disapprove. Her triumph was immediate. ' Her beauty, her loveliness, her musical talents, and her loving, playful and affectionate ways proved a never-ceasing delight to all of them.'

Uncle James became her slave almost from the first moment. And when, a few years later, he was succeeded by his brother and her own father-in-law, Hans Lord Dufferin, there was no question of any further disapproval. Summer after summer she would cross to Clandeboye with her son and husband. The old Lord Dufferin was famous for his capacity for drinking several bottles of claret without displaying the slightest alteration in gait, articulation or colour ; and one of my uncle's earliest recollections was, as a child of five, being told by his grandfather to stand upon the dining-table and to drink Tory toasts. It may have been the memory of this premature indulgence which later rendered him a Liberal and almost a teetotaller.

In 1831 Captain Price Blackwood was appointed to the frigate *Imogen* and was absent for almost four years upon a voyage which took him to Rio, to the Cape, to India, to China and to Australia. During this

period Mrs. Blackwood lived either with Mrs. Tom Sheridan at Hampton Court, or else at Clandeboye with Uncle James. Her son was sent to the day school of Mr. Walton at Hampton. This school was not, in any sense, conducted on the Montessori system. There were brimstone and treacle and many whippings. 'The floggings at Eton,' recorded Lord Dufferin, 'were as child's play compared to the Hampton ones.' Yet he bore no resentment. Half a century later, when about to embark as Viceroy for India, he spent a day at Hampton Court reviving memories of his childhood, and walked across to pay a visit to his old schoolmaster who was still living. And when, a few months later, he opened the great Dufferin bridge at Benares, and learnt the identity of its engineer, he introduced into his official speech a tribute to 'the instructor of my earliest youth—an instructor, I may mention in passing, who knew the principles recommended by King Solomon'.

Old Mr. Walton, at Hampton, read this speech in the *Pioneer*. 'My old eyes,' he wrote to his former pupil, 'shed tears over the *Pioneer* which reported to me the details of the gathering at the opening of the Dufferin Bridge. Please accept my thanks, heartfelt thanks, for all your generous words in regard to my son and your old tutor and lover. My dearest Lord, you have poured large drops of comfort into my cup of bitterness.'

(5)

In 1839 Hans Lord Dufferin died at Clandeboye and Captain Price Blackwood succeeded to his title and

his enormous estates. They left their little house at Bookham, but did not cross to Ireland. Helen Dufferin had shown signs of that weakness of the chest which had proved so fatal to the Sheridan family; and the doctors ordered her to Italy. They took a house at Castellamare, with a wide terrace, a striped awning and little trees in pots. Their son and heir was sent to Mr. Cookesley's house at Eton where he remained till 1843.

In the summer of 1841 his father was obliged to leave Italy for a few weeks to settle some sudden complication which had arisen in the management of his Irish estates. He also desired (being only an Irish peer) to stand for Parliament and had in fact been adopted as prospective candidate for an impending by-election at Chatham. Before going to Chatham he went down to Eton and spent a happy day with his young son, feasting him and his friends with champagne. He then left for Chatham, fought and lost his election, and three weeks later travelled to Liverpool on his way to Ireland. On boarding the steam-packet for Belfast he felt slightly feverish and searched among his papers for that prescription which had been so valuable to him when stricken in India or on the Amazon. It was a prescription for morphine pills, and he sent his servant on shore with instructions to hurry to the nearest druggist. While the chemist was making up the prescription the steamer's bell clanged a warning across the wharf. The chemist was so flustered by this interruption that he appears to have compounded a fatal dose. When the boat arrived at Belfast it was found that Lord Dufferin lay dead in his bunk.



LORD DUFFERIN IN HIS ROOMS AT OXFORD

The young man warming his hand at the fire is the  
Earl of Glasgow

*From a contemporary water-colour*

The news was broken to the boy at Eton. 'I remember,' he records, 'standing on the little bridge overhanging the stream which forms the boundary of the College precinct, watching the willows waving in the wind, and saying to a friend: "It is very odd, I have every reason to be happy; to-night we have the boats, and to-morrow the holidays begin, and I am going over to my father in Ireland, and yet I feel quite wretched!"' The next morning, as I was packing my clothes, my tutor, Mr. Cookesley, sent for me. He looked very grave and said "I have got bad news for you; your father is very ill: what would you like to do?" I said I would like to go to him. "No, my poor boy, your father is dead."

He thus succeeded to the peerage and the Clandeboye estates when he was only fifteen years and one month old.

His mother, out at Castellamare, was prostrated by the shock. He immediately joined her and remained away from Eton for six months. He left Eton in 1843, and for eighteen months he lived with his mother, either at Clandeboye, or else at No. 29 Lower Brook Street. In January of 1845 he matriculated at Oxford. He was actually sick with excitement when staying at the Mitre the night before his initiation. He visited the rooms which had been allocated to him in Christ Church. He was disappointed (for they were in Peckwater) to find that instead of the mediæval oriels which he had imagined his windows were 'pure George III'.

Being by then a peer in his own right, he became a Gentleman Commoner. He wore a gown of silk and the tassel on his cap was of gold. He dined in



hall at a table separated from the more plebeian of his colleagues. He objected to such privilege and differentiation. 'We are not,' he wrote to his mother, 'even expected to do so much in our College examinations; in short, there is no circumstance in which we are not given the advantage; consequently we are tempted to think that there must be some intrinsic merit in ourselves to deserve such attention, and begin to look with contempt upon those of our fellow students who are not treated with like respect.'

I find it difficult to recognize the personality of my uncle, either during the Eton or the Oxford period. At Eton he was not extremely distinguished, although he was noted for his volubility and high spirits. At Oxford, he appears to have been unobtrusive, un-sporting, un-drinking, yet affable and gay. Dr. Kitchin, subsequently Dean of Durham, was later to record 'his beautiful courtesy, his affectionate feeling towards his lad-friends, his singular winning power'. This is authentic Dufferin. It is known that during his first year he consorted with his equals on the high table and thereby found himself immersed in the hunting set. Yet it is equally evident that in a short space of time he became bored with those 'who bruised the reed and crushed the grape' and that he soon sought after more gentle companionship. His intimates were Boyle and Hepburn—the former too uncouth, and the latter too saintly, to have become ornaments of any decorative group. He was one of the founders of the Pythic Club, a secret society on the analogy of the Cambridge Apostles; its members discussed in their dim rooms such subjects as the iniquity of blood-sports and the barbarism of duelling. I am glad to know that my

uncle, in each of these discussions, was on the side of the decadents.

It was a time at which the Oxford Movement had riven the University into opposing camps. It is clear that there was a period in his life when Lord Dufferin was deeply affected by Puseyism. He would fast for long periods, and for long periods he would sunder himself from his own gaiety and brood solemnly upon the Thirty-nine Articles. This fasting had a permanent effect upon his digestion, although the Thirty-nine Articles, while they stilled for a time his exuberant gaiety, did not form actual shapes in his mind. He obtained few honours and left, as Lord Salisbury and Ruskin left, without taking a degree. Yet the impress of Oxford remained with him throughout his life. Two months before he died he wrote to Herbert Fisher that 'except for my own home there is no place on earth that I love so much as Oxford'. And Sir Alfred Lyall, his official biographer (to whose industry I am so deeply indebted), records having seen him in October, 1901, leaning over Magdalen Bridge 'looking down the stream toward the sunset, absorbed, as it seemed to me, in the remembrance of bygone days'.

(6)

Yet what, essentially, can have been the nature of that remembrance? What real connection can there have been between this astute Pro-Consul and the small, swarthy, betasselled, and perturbed anchorite of his Christ Church period? I enjoy the picture of him as an old and gloriously broken man watching the current of the Cherwell stirring the weeds of Mag-

Magdalen Bridge. But what possible memories can Oxford have evoked? True it is that in his last term he became President of the Union, yet I suspect that in his case this was some artificial honour. True it is also that the strange fusion that he then proclaimed between asceticism, romanticism, charm, simplicity and a certain grandeur must have fascinated and sometimes overwhelmed his contemporaries. True it is, again, that some of his Oxford friendships remained for him as sentimental responsibilities throughout his life. Yet so much had intervened: Lord Palmerston, Lady Jocelyn and Queen Victoria, the crunch of ice-floes in the Arctic seas, Mr. Gladstone and the Irish Land Question, Canada, Russia, Turkey, India, Rome, Paris; and then the agonies of financial collapse. It must have been through a haze of gold and scarlet, of superb triumphs and galling defeats, that those young waters gleamed for him under the arches of Magdalen Bridge.

I feel indeed that Lord Dufferin, in the evening of his life, identified with Oxford that Scholarship which had meant so much to him after he had left. For him, as for so many of us, Oxford became the symbol of unacquired, as well as of acquired, learning. It shone for him in later years as the altar to which all that was most intellectual in his nature aspired. And above all, as he leant over the parapet of Magdalen Bridge, he was aware that he had always belonged. It is the gentle and unremitting possessiveness of Oxford that rivets to her the devotion of her sons.

One memory at least, a sudden steel engraving, would have emerged from this silent contemplation: the memory of Skibbereen. In 1846 the Irish potato

crop failed suddenly, and stories of starvation drifted to Ulster and even to Christ Church College, Oxford. Dufferin decided to investigate for himself. With his friend Edward Boyle he crossed to Dublin. They took the stage coach to Cork. 'At the end of every stage,' he wrote, 'the coach was surrounded by crowds of wretched creatures begging for something to eat. Wan little faces thrust themselves in at the window.'

From Cork they drove to Skibbereen which was the centre of the famine and typhus area. The first things they saw on entering the village were nine deal coffins at the side of the road. They paid a visit to the Vicar and found his wife in the parlour stitching shrouds. 'Dead bodies,' he wrote, 'had lain putrefying in the midst of the sick remnants of their families, none strong enough to remove them, until the rats and decay made it difficult to recognise that they had been human beings.' Such was Lord Dufferin's first confrontation with the starker realities of the Irish agricultural problem. He stood at the window of his Inn and threw loaves of bread to the rabble that fought and screamed below him.

The next day he and Mr. Boyle returned to the Gentleman Commoner's table at Christ Church. And on March 1, 1847, a very trenchant pamphlet was published by Mr. John Henry Parker of Oxford entitled: 'Narrative of a journey from Oxford to Skibbereen during the year of the Irish Famine by Lord Dufferin and the Hon. E. F. Boyle'.

It was his first published work. It did some good.

## IV

### LORD IN WAITING

Digression upon memory—The front door at Clandeboye—The outer and the inner halls—Portrait of Lord Dufferin as a young man—He is made an English Peer by Lord John Russell—The Irish Land Question—Ulster feelings—His difficult position as an Irish landlord and a supporter of Mr. Gladstone—His pamphlets and letters—His desire to escape to Scotland—Lord in Waiting—London in 1849—His reminiscences and ghost stories—The Queen's visit to Ireland—Lady Jocelyn.

#### (I)

How interesting it is that the five senses should possess such unequal strengths of evocation, that the stimulus which each of them provides to memory should show such variations in intensity. Eyesight would seem to be the most forgetful of all our senses, and when we visit again the rooms or shrubberies of our childhood there comes to us no sudden lifting of the veils of consciousness, no quick reverberation of the past. The ear also is a self-conscious organ, which forbids us deliberately to invoke the sound of early prayers and laughter or the inflexion of those voices which have long been stilled. Only in moments of unawareness will the ear accord us a sudden spasm of recognition, as when the sash of the drawing-room window squeaks when lifted, a street-organ plays a tune from 'Floradora', or a hansom at nighttime jingles down the Mall.

Strange it is also that the conjoint senses of taste

and smell should affect the memory so differently. The palate has but a feeble power of evocation and it was the feel, rather than the taste, of his madeleine that set Proust sauntering down the corridors of his timid past. Only dimly will a cup of arrowroot recall for me the oil-cloth and the jaeger dressing-gown of my infant suppers, nor if I taste again the delights of malt-extract does my mouth stretch instinctively to the scale of a once enormous spoon. Whereas the sense of smell, so kindred to the palate, is the most potent of all memory-conductors and, at its evocation, childhood and middle age are blended in a sudden flash. The rind of conscious association is at such moments sliced wide open and the wet fruit of memory lies tender and exposed. Mysterious and disturbing are these fusions between past and present experience; and in the after vacancy there echoes in us a sound of wonder;—forlorn and solemn as a twilight bell.

More perplexing than these is for me the relation between memory and the sense of touch. Only rarely, but with startling intensity, will the wires of our tactile sensations conduct for us the flame of unconscious recollection. Yet when this contact is established the resultant throb of identification is as alive as any other. A forgotten set of Diabolo is discovered in the box-room and the feel and balance of those slim tensed wands evoke the sound of a lawnmower and the careless cries of 1910. We finger the clasp of a discarded suitcase and in a flash there comes the tinkle of a tooth-glass in the Orient Express and a puff of Odol from the adjoining compartment. The wet and fibrous deck of a toy sailing boat will evoke, as the finger slides along it, the smell of pond-mud

and the tufts of sheep-wool clinging to the wire of the paddock. The fact that the stimulus of touch seldom acts directly upon the memory, but illumines other lamps in other areas, causes the remembered incident or atmosphere to emerge with almost stereoscopic clarity, enhanced as it is by the attendant associations of sight, and scent, and sound.

In such a manner would I be affected when, after a year of absence, my fingers closed upon the handle of the entrance door to Clandeboye. It was a large round handle and in my childhood days I could turn it only by clasping it in both hands. In later years (for it was carefully oiled) I could place my palm upon the ormolu rosette which flowered in its centre and grasp with flexed fingers the encircling wood. The latch would slide noiselessly but before pushing the great door open I would pause in anticipation of the impressions which I knew would follow.

First would come the scrape of wood on stone, since the door was continued downwards by a hinged flap or flange which protected the hall from the draughts of Northern Ireland and which would rise as the door was opened, scraping upwards along the step. Then would come a puff of inside air, the smell of the outer hall (a smell of stone and plaster), the fainter smell of the inner hall (a smell of varnished deal and velvet cushions) and thereafter a mingled foretaste of all the other smells of that large house, from the smell of grapes and marsala in the dining-room, to the smell of French polish in the saloon, the smell of calf bindings in the library, the smell of dried rose leaves and picture varnish in the great gallery, the smell of sandalwood which spread out-

wards from the pompeian cupboards of my aunt's dressing-room.

The outer hall at Clandeboye (since my uncle possessed acquisitive instincts and had travelled much) was filled with many lovable objects. The steps which led down to the front door were flanked by a double row of curling stones from Scotland and from Canada, some of which bore silver plaques commemorative of curling triumphs at Inveraray or at Montreal. To the left of these unwieldy playthings stood an enormous block of Egyptian granite carved with the semblance of the cow-headed Hathor and bearing the ibis cartouche of Thutmosis I. Balanced upon this pink monolith was the stuffed and startled head of a rhinoceros. In the plaster of the left wall were embedded a series of Greek inscriptions picked out in red paint. These, when I became old enough to decipher them, proved to be little more than the play-bills of the time, announcing to Thebes or Eleusis the impending performance of some now unknown trilogy. Beyond these inscriptions a Russian bear reared enormous paws. On the right hand of the entrance, a mummy case, two cannon, a Burmese bell slung between carved figures, and a second bear of smaller dimensions, were artistically grouped; the wall behind them had been covered with wire netting on which were affixed dirks, daggers, cutlasses, pistols, lances, curling brooms, and a collection of those neat little fly-whisks with which the acolytes dust the high altar of St. Peter's at Rome.

The inner hall was larger and more deliberately baronial. It was lit by a vast tudor window bearing the arms and quarterings of the Blackwoods and the



Hamiltons. There flamed the cap of maintenance and the scarlet crescent. There blazed the heraldic tiger ermine and the flags of Burmah charged with a peacock in its pride proper. There glittered the stars and collars of the Indian Empire, St. Patrick and the Bath. And there also shone the simpler emblems of the Hamilton family. That bleeding heart. That gentle antelope; on this occasion affronté, ermine, attired and unguled.

Below this glittering Victorian window the inner hall appeared a trifle shrouded. There was a circular table in the centre littered with writing implements in wood and brass. There was a large cabinet inlaid with Chinese plates upon the summit of which reposed a stuffed walrus from Spitzbergen. There was a wind organ which played the tune from 'Magda'. There was an eight-foot idol of the Kwakewlth Indians which Lord Dufferin had acquired in Vancouver. The great claws of this fetish were raised as if to pounce; from its scarlet head rose two blue horns and its mouth gaped with white fangs and an angry tongue; around its waist (since it represented a God of fertility) was delicately draped a loin-cloth of Malayan embroidery in which had once been wrapped a silver address box presented by the municipality of Rangoon. At family prayers, which in the early days were held with majestic ceremony in the inner hall, I would choose a chair in close proximity to this flaming and obscene totem, praying ardently to it in a spirit, partly of daring, and partly of exorcism. I was not frightened of this particular idol. He was far less menacing than the Sekhmets and the Sivas of the upper corridors. He was on the whole a friendly beast.

On each side of the fireplace, two thrones in carpenter's gothic reared their canopies almost to the ceiling. They were cushioned in blue velvet enriched with golden tassels. And between them, above the wide baronial fireplace, hung a portrait of Lord Dufferin at the age of twenty-three.

(2)

This portrait shows him standing upright in his swart beauty with his arms stretched downwards in a gesture of determination and his eyes confronting the future with triumphant resolve. So marked was the impression of self-dedication, of young Knight-hood, of virile virginity, which this execrable picture conveyed, that for many years I believed it to be a representation of Sir Galahad, or at least of some young Crusader taken at the moment when he had decided, in spite of other engagements, to leave that very evening for Aigues Mortes. To this day I am convinced that the spirit of the Eglinton Tournament had eaten deep into the artist's consciousness and that his brush had been guided by such confused associations as chastity, the Oxford Movement and a very rich young peer. Yet in fact the portrait represented Lord Dufferin in no such fantastic accoutrements but in the comparatively humdrum trappings of an English baron. Shortly after coming of age he had openly declared himself a Whig, not only in heart but in politics as well; and had been rewarded for this declaration by Lord John Russell, who in 1849 conferred upon him an English peerage in addition to the Irish peerage which he already so much enjoyed. Thereafter, for a space of years, he would sign him-

self, not 'Dufferin' only, but 'Dufferin and Clande-boye'. And it was in the robes of this, the first of his innumerable honours, that he was painted at No. 29 Lower Brook Street with his right foot thrust slightly forward, and faith, hope and charity mingling in his splendid eyes.

It seems strange to us to-day that a man as gifted and as ambitious as the young Lord Dufferin should at the very outset of his career have sundered himself from the ardours of the House of Commons and have gratuitously chosen what even in those distant days was the less exacting arena of the Upper Chamber. It would have been easy for him as an Irish peer of wealth and promise to obtain some safe Whig seat and to serve his first years of political education amid the gay and creative combats of the Lower House. His disinclination to do so throws some light upon his character and circumstances. Although strong-willed and determined, he did not possess the controversial temperament so essential to Parliamentary success. He was an adept at persuasion, a very genius of conciliation, but the give and take of argument rendered him impatient and even distressed. Much as he delighted in verbal felicity, much as he relished the elegant metaphor or the imaginative simile, it was uncongenial for him to employ these charming gauds as the instruments of public defeat or victory or as the weapons of a rough and tumble debate. To this fastidiousness was added, in that early Victorian epoch, a hampering uncertainty regarding his own convictions. Although a powerful Irish landlord, his heart was tormented with shame and pity at the plight of the Irish tenants. Although forced by circumstances

and his own ambition to plunge into active controversies, he was by temperament an artist, a poet and a dilettante. Being, to the very core of his nature, a romantic and visionary he had in his youth but little of that healthy zest for the practical which is the stimulus and the justification of the professional politician. And being gentle in heart, he winced away from those cruder forms of reality which would remind him that he lived in what was fast becoming an ugly and a selfish age.

The Irish Land Question, above all, perplexed and pestered him with the conflicting appeals which it made to his affections, his reason, his tenderness, and his love of great possessions. His whole early manhood was clouded and confused by an attempt to adjust three warring loyalties; his loyalty to the caste of Irish landowner, his loyalty to Mr. Gladstone, and his loyalty to the Irish peasant whom he pitied but whom he did not really love.

We are inclined, in our present epoch of fear and violence, to look back upon the nineteenth century as an age of continuity and to envy our forebears their happy confidence that children and grandchildren would inherit a world not dissimilar to their own. Yet it would seem that the fates accord to the generations of men an almost equal ration of anxiety; and that our grandfathers, while immune from our present dread of Thersites or of Tiridates, endured equal agonies of soul at the thought of Dr. Pusey, or of Bishop Colenso, or of Mr. Parnell.

It must indeed be difficult for our younger generation to conceive of the passions aroused before August, 1914, by the Irish question. My own childhood and

youth were perplexed at the thunder of these controversies, by which I was (and am) profoundly bored. Yet even in my infancy I was aware that the red hand of Ulster held my mother in its unyielding grip and that at the mention of Mr. Gladstone her eyes (so shyly gentle in all their movements) would become as fierce and fixed as those of Joan of Arc confronting the Duke of Burgundy at Compiègne. This marked distaste for Mr. Gladstone was shared, I afterwards discovered, by Tom Moore, the house carpenter at Clandeboye. I would spend hours in his shop, planing little pieces of wood, fashioning clumsy picture-frames and talking happily until the evening sun crept round to those dusted lattices and I would return to tea in the schoolroom leaving bloodstains among the shavings but taking much sawdust with me, much paint upon my knees, much glue in the tangle of my hair. Tom Moore would tell me how he had wished to kill Mr. Gladstone and how, if need be, he would 'fight for the right'. I can see him now with his long sandy beard, his bleared blue eyes, and the check cap he never discarded, raising his adze aloft in imprecations against the Catholics, and the traitors of Westminster. In the yard outside stood the gasometer which my uncle had installed to provide him with the acetylene gas which popped and blinked along the passages of Clandeboye. Accompanying me one evening into the outer sunlight Tom Moore had struck this vast drum with his adze in illustration of the kind of assault which he had wished to make upon the Liberal leader. It echoed with a horrible reverberation like the gong of doom. And in truth, before twelve years had passed, there was my Hamilton

uncle drilling rebels in the great courtyard of Killyleagh.

I recollect also, when I was very small, being taken to some fête or horse-show in the neighbourhood of Dublin. I drove there with my grandmother in a landau and I remember how silent the carriage became as it left the main road and swung squeaking into the meadow where the fête was held. 'Look!' said my grandmother, in sudden excitement. 'Look at that lady over there in the tilbury.' There was in fact a woman in a high dog-cart with a little groom holding a restless horse. 'Look,' repeated my grandmother, 'and remember that you have seen Mrs. O'Shea.' I looked again. She seemed an ordinary lady in a man's straw hat and with the tight bust of the time. 'Who is she, Grannie?' I asked. 'Never mind,' she answered, 'remember only that you have seen Mrs. O'Shea.' That name, that hour-glass silhouette, the smell of trampled grass, the amused look in my grandmother's eyes still live in my recollection. I had seen the cause of Ireland's greatest tragedy.

For me these faiths and controversies, these loves and hatreds, were but tiresome intrusions upon the happiness of Clondeboy and Killyleagh. Miss Plimsoll for her part, was frightened of Fenians. She was convinced that they desired to blow my uncle up. Walking round the lake one August evening I tripped over a spring-gun laid there to warn the keepers of marauding poachers. It exploded with a loud report, Miss Plimsoll screamed like a wounded hare and darted behind a fine bush of spiræa. I remained on the path, startled but unperturbed. Miss Plimsoll emerged with ruffled dignity from behind the spiræa

and we resumed our walk. 'You must remember, dear,' she said, 'never to do that again. I thought it was the Fenians.' 'The what, Miss Plimsoll?' 'The Fenians, dear.' I left it at that. I was afraid, at that time, only of the supernatural.

Am I unfilial in treating with such levity matters which to my mother and her family were of overwhelming seriousness? Or is it atavism which dulls my sympathy for the calvinism of Ulster and sends my heart winging backwards to Hamilton Rowan of Killyleagh who schemed with Tone and Edward Fitzgerald on behalf of the United Irishmen, or across the sea to Skye where my Nicolson forbears wrangled in Gaelic with the MacDonalds? I rejoice that I am not concerned with any Irish controversy. Yet for my Uncle Dufferin the combat with the Land League and then with the Home Rulers cast recurrent clouds across the wide and sun-splashed landscape of his life.

### (3)

From the outset he was in a false position. The memory of Skibbereen had left a permanent impress upon his sensibility whereas his liberal principles and his respect for Mr. Gladstone imposed progressive views. He was not unaware that his ancestors had obtained these lands by spoliation, nor had he anything but contempt for those absentee landlords who allowed their agents to oppress the peasantry. Yet he was a man of great possessions and he felt a need of loyalty towards his caste.

Even his reason came into conflict with his sympathies. He saw clearly that a small agricultural country with a rapidly expanding population was faced

with the two alternatives of emigration or starvation. In letters to *The Times* and in successive pamphlets he expressed the view that the duty of the British Government was to uphold law and order and 'to allow emigration to drain off the surplus population'. His advocacy of this policy of despair led him into public combat with no less an opponent than John Stuart Mill. It provoked Gustavus Dalton to accuse him of wishing to exile his poorer compatriots to the United States. Dufferin replied in a fourth letter to *The Times* contending that by 'emigration' he had meant only temporary and gainful employment in England. Dr. Dalton was not appeased. He replied that Lord Dufferin's last letter had shown 'little of the ability and still less of the genuine kindliness of heart, which, in spite of blunders inconceivable in so clever a man, shed a grace over his former communications. He has, after all, no remedy but the remedy of which he has the grace to be ashamed; the coarse and desperate remedy of emigration.'

Dufferin was wounded by this onslaught. His own conscience was clear. He had never adopted a reactionary attitude and had in fact risen in the House of Lords to indict the attitude of the average Irish landlord towards his tenants as being 'almost of a barbarous character'. On that occasion (it was his maiden speech) he had urged that the tenants should be given some greater fixity of tenure and the right to their own improvements. In so doing he anticipated Mr. Gladstone's Land Bill by sixteen years.

His attitude to the whole problem was one of slightly embittered pessimism. 'I do most firmly believe,' he wrote in 1849, 'that in no other country



under the sun are there to be found men so wretched in every respect. To me it appears that their condition is hopeless. Generation after generation has grown up in ignorance and misery while those who have lived on the product of their labour have laughed and rioted through life, as though they had never known that from them alone could light and civilization descend upon these wretches.'

Lord Dufferin in his constant preoccupation with Ireland neither laughed nor rioted. The situation in County Down, where the Ulster Tenant Right had long been respected, was less atrocious than that of Western Ireland. Yet even around the Clondeboy demesne there was much destitution and misery, nor did the Presbyterian Scottish tenants feel so very much closer to their Protestant landlords than did the Catholic peasantry of the south and west. Lord Dufferin salved his aching conscience by gestures of wild and romantic generosity to his own tenants. On coming of age he presented them with remissions of rent amounting to £2,000 a year off his own income. To outgoing tenants he paid as much as £18,000 for the improvements they had effected. He spent some £78,000 in bettering the conditions of his farms without in a single case increasing his rent charges. He dug the two vast lakes at Clondeboy; he constructed a fantastic folly in the shape of a two and a half mile avenue connecting the demesne with Helen's Bay; in the hope of relieving unemployment.

He well knew that such gestures were but palliatives. Hour after hour would he spend with Mr. Gladstone progressing slowly along the road to State Purchase. He respected Mr. Gladstone but was dis-

tressed by his ignorance of Irish conditions, as by his blind insistence upon reconciling awkward facts with comfortable theories. 'I have,' he wrote, 'hardly ever conversed with him that I have not felt my face burn with irritation when I left his presence.' By 1870, however, he abandoned all hope of maintaining proprietary rights in Ireland. From that date onwards he began to dispose of his estates in County Down, retaining only the Clandeboye demesne and the Helen's Bay property. Nor were these sales unprofitable. He realised in all the large sum of £370,000.

There were times, during this long drawn battle for his estates, when he almost lost self-confidence. 'Unless,' he wrote to his mother in 1853, 'an almost miraculous change in my constitution takes place, I can never hope to become either a distinguished or a successful statesman.' The fact that he was unable for so long to achieve any fitting adjustment between his divided Irish loyalties, dislocated his political career and all but damped his ambition. It was only when he escaped from this dilemma to the wider fields of diplomacy and empire that any real harmony was achieved between his purpose and his opportunity, between his ambitions and his functions, between his conscience and his circumstances. But for this escape, Ireland might well have broken *his* heart also ; and ruined an imperial career.

It is interesting to me to discover that this necessity of an escape from Ireland dawned upon him almost in his boyhood. The lure of Walter Scott, his own passion for Inveraray, induced him as a young man seriously to consider some reversion to his own Scottish ancestry. There was a period, shortly before

he came of age, when he dreamt of disposing of his Irish estates and establishing himself baronially in Scotland upon a smaller but less galling income. He would discuss these projects with the Duke and Duchess of Argyll, dreaming of a contented and prosperous tenantry, of castellated pinnacles rising above grey lochs, of freedom from the pangs and pities of an Irish estate. Always, at the last moment, the charm of Ireland would tug again at his heart and as he came to remould Clondeboyne closer to his desire, as white walls and meagre holdings were replaced by sweeps of park and the glint of lakes between the woods that he had planted, his instinctive love for this green corner of the earth, became enhanced by personal pride in his own creation. 'Here I am,' he wrote in 1853, 'home, home, home, *home*—amid drenched fields, leafless bushes and a misty mockery of a park—which, against my better reason, I cannot help loving more than any place in the world.'

## (4)

I have suggested this shadowed background in order to enhance the radiance of my portrait. For to me the Dufferin of 1849-1859 is neither the perplexed Irish landlord, nor yet the harassed pamphleteer, nor yet the uncertain Whig hesitating whether he could dare to become a Liberal. To me he is the young man of the Swinton drawing, the young man with the gay mouth and dreaming eyes, the young man whom Queen Victoria found 'much too good-looking and captivating' to become her Lord in Waiting.

I see him in that year 1849 at twenty-three years of age. It was the year in which London society laughed



TEA TIME IN LOWER BROOK STREET

*From a contemporary sketch*

The matronly back in the left foreground is that of Lady Granville. Helen, Lady Dufferin is engaged in pouring out tea. Opposite her sits Mlle de Flahaut. Lord Dufferin stands in the far corner of the room leaning over the back of a sofa. The central group consists of Lady Ailesbury, Lord Granville and Lord Shelbourne. On the extreme right le Comte de Flahaut is talking to Lady Shelbourne.

with relief at having been spared the revolutions of 1848. Nothing could cloud the exuberance of that season. Not even the cholera, or the demise of the Queen Dowager Adelaide, or the collapse of Lady Blessington, or the Punjab war, or the attempt upon Her Majesty's life on Constitution Hill, or the death of Chopin, or the strange doings of the Prince President in Italy, or the first futile venture of Garibaldi. There was so much that was exciting both to hear and to see. There was the Queen with her handsome husband and her four adorable little children. There was the Royal Chinese junk down at the East India docks. There was the Friesland dwarf and 'La lutte voltigeuse' at Drury Lane. One could hear the 'Tragedy of Garcia' at Sadler's Wells and one could visit the gas-lit pantomime at Astley's. Not a week passed in which some new railroad station or aqueduct failed to bear testimony to our unexampled progress. The giant water lily at Chatsworth (the *Victoria Regia*) burst into three separate blooms and Miss Paxton was depicted standing prim and secure upon one of its gigantic leaves. There was the ascent of Mr. Green's balloon from Vauxhall Gardens and the opening of the Britannia Bridge across the Menai Straits. There was the Rush murder trial and the huge sea-serpent observed and even sketched by an officer of H.M.S. *Plumper*. There was the opening of the new Exchange at Manchester, and the completion of the great Doric railway station designed by Mr. Hardwick for the London and North Western Railway Company in Euston Square.

Lord Dufferin's attendances at the House of Lords became less and less frequent and he received from

Lady John Russell a tactful reminder that in her husband's opinion the duty of a hereditary legislator was to legislate. Yet in those spring months of 1849 he enjoyed to the full the privileges of his position and the opportunities afforded to him by his wealth, his beauty and his charm. Night after night he would dance until the boys upon the pavement below snuffed their links at the coming of the dawn. He would breakfast with Samuel Rogers in St. James' Place, or talk to Thackeray as he shaved, or laugh with his mother while she sipped her morning chocolate, or drive his curricule around the Park. Hour after hour also he would sit with Lady Palmerston in her blue boudoir and listen to the slow drawling voice in which she told him stories of the Prince Regent, stories of Madame de Stael, stories of cousin Caro Lamb and the days when Lord Byron would limp self-conscious and searching for insults up the great staircase of Melbourne House.

He was interested in such anecdotes and in his old age he would retell them to his nephews and his grandchildren. There was the story of how, when in waiting at Windsor, he played Patience with the Duke of Wellington. 'Would you believe it?' the Duke had said, 'one of my Aides-de-Camp once asked me whether I had ever known Queen Elizabeth.'

There was the story told him by the Comte de Flahaut who had been in attendance on Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo. It was towards the end of that fateful day and the Emperor was sick with pain and exhaustion. The French guard had advanced to its final attack and the line was wavering. Napoleon stretched his little hand towards de Flahaut and

beckoned for his field glasses. He fixed his gaze upon the distant turmoil and then closed the glasses with a snap. 'Je crois,' he said, 'qu'ils sont mêlés.' He then turned his horse and rode in silence from the field.

There was another story which never failed to fill me with terror. He told it me as if it had happened to himself. In the late summer of 1849, when the Court had gone to Balmoral, he made a tour in western Ireland. He arrived one afternoon at a large house in County Mayo and was invited to dine and sleep. Having said good night to his host and hostess he retired to his bedroom and lit a number of candles for he had much work to do. The writing table was placed near the window, which, since the night was close and still, he had left open. Soon after midnight he was surprised to hear the sound of wheels on the gravel outside and in the beam of light cast by his candles he saw a large hearse with two horses drive up to the front door. The driver of the hearse glanced up at the open window and his face shone in the beam of light. Lord Dufferin rose from his chair in cold panic; the face below him, the eyes that had met his, were the most sinister that he had ever seen. It was a foreign face, unshaven and sulky. He felt a cold sweat upon his forehead and drew the curtains hurriedly. A few moments later he heard the hearse drive off into the night. The face of the driver for ever haunted his memory.

Forty years later he was in Paris and was visiting a friend at the Continental Hotel. The hotel clerk bowed him towards the lift which at that date was a modern innovation. He was about to enter when the face of the lift-man chilled him with horror. It



was the face of the man who had driven that hearse in County Mayo forty years before. Lord Dufferin stepped back with a gesture of refusal. He would prefer, he said, to walk up the staircase.

‘And what happened,’ I would ask, ‘to the lift-man, Uncle Dufferin?’

‘The lift fell’ (and he accompanied these words with a downward sweep of his hand). ‘He was *killed*.’

And then, a few minutes later, we should have to leave the library and make our way back to the nursery floor, past the statues that glimmered in the gallery, past the statue of the Viking, the statue of the Duchess of Argyll, the statue of Sekhmet and the bronze statue of Siva. Then the green baize door would admit us to the less terrifying neighbourhood of the serving-room with the comforting smell of sunlight soap and paraffin and old wine corks and the knowledge that but a few steps farther on was the nursery staircase, and Miss Plimsoll waiting with the milk and rusks, and Miss Plimsoll ready to leave her door open just a tiny crack, and the relief to feel that at Clandeboye my brother shared my bedroom.

(5)

Lord John Russell, for his part, was determined that so able a recruit must be attached more firmly to the Whig colours. He overcame the scruples of the Queen and induced her to appoint Lord Dufferin one of her Lords in Waiting. There thus followed five years of arduous court functions interspersed with service in the House of Lords. It entailed Windsor, and Osborne House and long hours spent in gazing at photograph albums, in coping with the Duchess of

Kent or the Duke of Gloucester, and in playing jeux de société with the Princesses Amelie and Elise of Hohenlohe-Schillingfurst, and Lady Fanny Howard, and Lady Augusta Cadogan, and Lady Caroline Cocks, and Baron Stockmar and Baron Kneesebeck. Yet there were compensations for this servitude. The Queen still retained something of her early gaiety and would point and giggle and tease him about his long poetic hair. On Wednesday evenings at Windsor there would be music or some theatrical performance, when Jenny Lind would sing duets with Signor Belletti or Mr. Charles Kean would produce 'Used Up'—a comedy adapted from the French. And in the very first weeks of his appointment there was a state visit to Ireland which for him possessed something far more than merely ceremonial significance.

The Queen, the Prince Consort and the four children embarked one August evening at Osborne and set sail for Cork. At Cork Cove, which thereafter, and for more than seventy years, was honoured by the name of Queenstown, they were accorded a frenzied reception. On 6th August the *Victoria and Albert* paddled into Dublin Bay. The Queen landed leaning on the arm of the Prince Consort and arrayed in a pelisse of Irish poplin, emerald green in colour and embroidered with gold shamrocks. The visit was a triumphant success. Lord Dufferin wrote in pride and delight to Lady John Russell :

'I never witnessed so touching a sight as when the Queen from her quarter-deck took leave of the Irish people. It was a sweet, calm, silent evening, and the sun just setting behind the Wicklow mountains bathed all things in golden floods of light. Upon the beach were

crowded in thousands the screaming people full of love and devotion for her, her children and her house, surging to and fro like some horrid sea, and asking her to come back quick to them and wishing her God-speed. I do not like popular demonstrations of applause ; generally speaking, there is something terribly humiliating in the sight of an enthusiastic mob. It always reminds me somehow of the meanness and baseness of humanity. This time I was neither shocked nor disgusted. It was a beautiful historical picture and one which one thought of for a long time after Queen and ships and people had vanished away. I suspect that she too must have thought of it that night as she sat upon the deck and sailed away into the darkness—and perhaps she wondered as she looked back upon the land which ever has been, and still is, the dwelling of so much wrong and misery, whether it should be written in history hereafter that in *her* reign, and under *her* auspices, Ireland first became prosperous and her people contented.'

For the young Lord Dufferin this visit was coloured, not only by the sun setting behind the Wicklow Mountains, but by the fact that among the Queen's ladies was Frances Cowper, daughter of Lady Palmerston and the wife of Lord Jocelyn, son and heir to Lord Roden. Dufferin himself had preceded the royal party and was waiting in Lord Breadalbane's house at Kingstown when the *Victoria and Albert* arrived. His record of this event is not without significance :

' Directly the yacht had entered the harbour the men-of-war started and manned their yards, the populace shouted, the drums played, the yachts hoisted all their colours ; and I felt that it was a fine thing to be a Queen. She was standing upon deck amidst her children ; and just behind her I could see Lady Jocelyn talking to Lord

Fortescue. And then I felt as if it were a finer thing to be a Lord-in-waiting.'

This romantic attachment lasted for many years, and there was some gossip at court. It reached the ears of the Queen who may well have remembered her warning to Lord John Russell on the subject of Lord Dufferin's seductive charm. She appears, none the less, to have regarded this romance with sympathetic eyes. There is a note in Lord Dufferin's journal written in 1851 when he was on duty at Windsor. 'Visited Lady Jocelyn in her room. Suddenly the Queen came in, and made me a low curtsy in fun.' It may have been his chivalrous devotion to Lady Jocelyn which induced him to remain a bachelor until his thirty-seventh year. As a young man, profoundly influenced by the ethics of Walter Scott, he regarded feminine purity as the most untouchable of human virtues: we may be certain that his devotion to Lady Jocelyn remained unavowed.

Forty-five years later he visited her grave at Cannes, where she had died in 1880. He made the following entry in his journal:

'I found the tombs of poor Lady Jocelyn, Lord Roden, and my godson Eric Jocelyn, and left a wreath on Lady Jocelyn's.

'She was the earliest and dearest friend I ever had; a most beautiful, attractive and good woman. When I knew her, she had everything that this world can give; a happy home, a husband she loved, four beautiful children; beauty, charm, popularity. She was the step-daughter of the Prime Minister, one of the Queen's ladies and one of her dearest friends. She lived in a charming little cottage the Queen had given her at Kew, which

was the very home of peace and domestic happiness. Her husband, who had been in the army, had become Colonel of a Militia regiment. His regiment was quartered at the Tower when the cholera broke out, and he thought it his duty to go and sleep there for a few nights to encourage his men. He was suddenly seized with cholera and was taken to Lord Palmerston's house where he died. Her eldest daughter was severely burnt in the neck, and a few years afterwards died unmarried. Her next daughter, Edith, who married Lord Sudely, also died young. The next to die was my poor little god-child, Frederick. Last of all her eldest son Lord Roden was struck down by a fatal illness and she herself died in less than three months afterwards.

‘It was a great tragedy.’

# V

## HIGH LATITUDES

The picture of Jan Mayen—His expedition to Bomarsund—Return to Windsor—My own early attitude to *Letters from High Latitudes*—Miss Plimsoll's passion for the Arctic—The *Foam* and its figure-head—Iceland and Spitzbergen—The Prince Napoleon and the Reine Hortense—The passage of his youth—London in 1856.

### (I)

ON emerging from the inner hall at Clandeboye, one passed under the armorial window and found oneself in a narrow corridor lighted by a glass roof. This corridor (although in the main axis which ran through the inner hall to the outer hall and thus to the front door), was out of proportion both to what came before and to what came after. It was little more than six feet wide and, having remained a corridor for sufficient time to allow space for the door of the Museum on the right, it ceased to be a corridor and became a flight of steps, leading upwards under its skylight until it terminated in a small but elegant statue of Amen-Hetep II seated upon his throne. One then turned sharply to the right, opened a blue baize door on the left, and found oneself in the great well of the main staircase with the high vault of the gallery echoing beyond.

The reasons for this strange structural confusion were partly the conformation of the site and partly Lord Dufferin's optimism regarding his own capacity

as an architect. The house which he had inherited in 1841 stood on a high level, sloping gently towards the river on the south and east, but perched, in so far as its western and northern frontages were concerned, upon an abrupt mound or eminence. It was a commodious Georgian building plastered in greyish chalk in the manner of most Anglo-Irish mansions. Yet it was marred by two major disadvantages. In the first place it compared poorly, both in size and decoration, with Inveraray, with Highcliffe or even with Knebworth. And in the second place the entrance was on the south side, under the doric columns and the pediment.

Lord Dufferin, on succeeding to his estates, determined to remedy these and other defects. I have already related how he swept away the surrounding farms and fields, moulding them into a park which undulated from plantation to plantation, and which culminated in that rounded hill upon the summit of which the turret of Helen's Tower dominated sea and land. The little river, once it had entered the precincts of Clandeboye, was allowed but a short run of fluvial life, and was enlarged into a series of enormous lakes, complete with islands, gulfs, channels, hidden reefs and peninsulas. The road from Bangor remained as it was. The road from Belfast was intersected by the avenue of which I have already spoken, and which pursued its relentless and weed-covered way through fields and farms until it ended in the sudden tang of seaweed and with the sound of waves upon the rocks at Helen's Bay.

There was a time when Lord Dufferin decided to pull down the original mansion and to erect another

in its place. He commissioned an architect to prepare designs for this stately home and these designs have been preserved. The style which the architect had chosen to suit the taste of his romantic patron was one which combined the simplicity of Balmoral with the elegance of Chambord or of Blois. It suggested, at one and the same time, François Premier and the Prince Consort. The cost of this vast Pierrefonds which Lord Dufferin desired to erect amid the errant fields of County Down was prohibitive even of his extravagance. The designs were bound together and placed in the library. Lord Dufferin decided to enlarge the house in terms of his own imagination and bit by bit. His first problem, as is the experience of most amateur architects, was the problem of levels.

It was essential to swing the entrance away from the south side and towards the west. His first move was completely successful in that from the old hall and entrance he constructed the present library which seemed to me (and still seems to me) one of the pleasantest rooms on earth. But when it came to constructing a new entrance and a new series of halls and offices upon the lower level he had recourse to stairways and skylights. His passion for glass roofing was in fact uncontrolled. He built a vast series of domestic offices—including gun-rooms, still-rooms, boot-rooms, servants' halls, housekeepers' rooms, stewards' rooms, lamp-rooms, brushing-rooms, laundries, drying-rooms, storerooms and linen-rooms—which were concealed from the view of the approaching stranger by a high blank wall and which were illumined, in the full spirit of the industrial revival, by windows in the roof. Nor did he confine this system of lighting



and ventilation to the lower orders. The gentlemen's lavatory to the left of the outer hall was also constructed upon the same principle. It seemed to me the most lavish of all known latrines. There was a small vestibule, with a Turkey rug and a washing basin complete with towel-rail and brushes. There was a gas-jet enclosed in a globe of milky glass. There were three separate closets side by side as in a club. And above it all brooded a cloistral silence, the smell of varnished deal, the smell of Vinolia soap, the smell of the crushed ivy tendrils which had crept inside the skylight, the smell of damp plaster, the smell of carbolic disinfectant. The feet of the footmen crossing the stone passage-way outside added to this sense of refined seclusion; the echo of their boots upon the flagstones enhanced the muffled luxury of the Turkey carpet. The billiard room and the museum were also sky-lit. And, as I have said, the corridor staircase which led up from the new buildings on the lower level to the old buildings on the higher level was similarly illumined by glass panes in its ceiling. This staircase corridor gave the impression of a provisional annexe, as if a covered gangway, leading, for the transitory purpose of some supreme ceremony, from the Chapter House into the Cathedral itself. For not only were the steps of this gangway made of inexpensive deal which bent and squeaked under any heavy footstep, but the objects which decorated the Lincrusta wallpaper on either side, were less permanent in effect, and indeed in intention, than the oil paintings of Judith and Holofernes, or the giant statuary, which enriched the gallery beyond. Yet in themselves these objects were curious and rare.

There was a glass tube fourteen feet long which contained a rope used some six thousand years ago to lower the sarcophagi of the VIth Dynasty into their tombs. There was a panoramic view from the top of Helen's Tower painted in spirited water colours. There were several tomahawks, two Thibetan trumpets, three Afghan shields and a mezzotint of Miss Henrietta Rae's Academy picture entitled 'Psyche before the Court of Venus'. There was also a framed letter from Nelson to Vice-Admiral Sir Henry Blackwood congratulating him on the gallant action fought on the night of 30th March, 1800, by the *Penelope* against the *Guillaume Tell*. And there was a large oil-painting in which, with his own not wholly unskilled brush, Lord Dufferin had immortalized his first view of Jan Mayen.

This picture puzzled me considerably. At first sight it appeared to be an accurate representation of some horse-hair mat upon the upper right hand corner of which someone had left a jagged piece of Delft china. On closer inspection, however, a small schooner in full sail could be descried traversing the rug from left to right. The passage of this boat was much impeded by chunks of floating ice. The rug or mat effect was caused by encircling banks of fog, and the piece of delft china represented the peak of Jan Mayen, emerging with its snow-capped dome into a little pond of clear blue sky. This oil-painting (of which my uncle was justly proud) had been worked up from a sketch made at the time and on the spot. That sketch is reproduced in every edition of *Letters from High Latitudes* and figures, even, in the Everyman Edition to front page 126.

## (2)

The Blackwoods had in fact for long been a seafaring race, and from his earliest childhood to his extreme old age Lord Dufferin entertained a passion for the sea. Even in his seventy-fourth year he would navigate his little yawl *The Lady Hermione* through the Sound of Jura or the deceptive tides of the Minch assisted only by a boy of fourteen. The yachting adventures of his earlier manhood were, however, conducted upon a more elaborate scale.

It was in July of 1854 that he embarked in his schooner *Foam* accompanied by Lord Arthur Russell and a fitting retinue. Great Britain at that date had already been six months at war with Russia, and the purpose of this yachting trip was to assist the Franco-British squadron operating in the Baltic. From Portsmouth they sailed to Calais and then northwards to Gothenburg. From there they tacked round to the Baltic and reached the Aland Islands at the very moment when the French and British fleets were on the point of attacking the fort of Bomarsund.

These elegant, though liberal-minded tourists were warmly received by Sir Charles Napier upon his flagship the *Duke of Wellington*. Lord Dufferin expressed the earnest desire to engage in battle. Sir Charles, who appears to have been the most amenable of admirals, permitted him to board the *Penelope* which had been ordered to draw the fire of the Russian forts. So effectively did she execute this mission that she ran aground while still within full range of the batteries. For four hours she remained stranded while the

Russian cannon volleyed and thundered. The captain, after several men had been killed on deck, became anxious about the fate of his young but eminent passenger. He begged Lord Dufferin to withdraw to the *Hecla* which, although also within range of the batteries, was at least afloat. Scarcely, however, had he reached this asylum when a round shot crashed on the deck 'close by the starboard great gun, covering me with a hail of splinters'. The *Penelope* was at last refloated but only at the cost of heaving her guns into the sea. The naval operations against the Aland Islands had not proved a success.

Having drunk his fill of naval warfare, Lord Dufferin decided to sample war on land. He obtained permission to visit the French army investing Bomarsund. He was conducted into the front line trenches, and between the Russian salvoes he skipped from battery to battery. While visiting the most advanced bastion, he observed a white flag being hoisted above the fort. He advanced with his companions towards the gate of the fort prepared, in chivalrous mood, to accept the Russian surrender. A Russian officer explained to them that as yet there was no question of capitulation and ordered them to return to cover without loss of time. They did so under a hail of bullets. But when the citadel did eventually surrender Lord Dufferin entered it with the French staff. He found himself in an oval courtyard packed with Russian troops. He noted specially the pungent smell of Russia, that mixture of fish-oil and leather, which to this day spreads from Poland to Vladivostock. He thereafter rejoined the *Foam* and sailed for Dunrobin, where he landed four weeks later, bringing with him two Russian

field pieces and a young walrus. He was warmly welcomed.

This Baltic expedition was but the prelude to a more extended and more famous journey. On his return to Clandeboye he was laid up with fever and, after accompanying Lord John Russell on his abortive mission to the Vienna Conference, he resumed his duties at Court. There is a note in his diary which records a conversation at Windsor in February, 1856 :

‘I told the Queen about the man who leapt 21 feet. Nobody believed it. I said I had leapt 15. The Prince said “That is as far as the end of the table from Miss Bulteel”. “If, Sir,” said I, “Miss Bulteel were on the other side, I should leap a foot further.”’

Such were the gallantries of the Court of Windsor.

### (3)

Early in 1856 he made careful preparations for his Arctic voyage. The story of that expedition has been fully told in his *Letters from High Latitudes*, a book which, for all its romanticism, manages even to this day to tingle with youthful zest. To many of his contemporaries this gay record of travel appeared to be in execrable taste ; it was unfitting, they contended, that a Lord in Waiting should confess to having got drunk at an Icelandic dinner party, or should mention in public print the names and eccentricities of his own dependents. The book, moreover, was couched in the form of private letters to his mother, it mentioned several well-known people, it displayed the character of its own author, it was not always very reverent regarding established institutions,

and it contained several quite common words. Yet it remains one of the few travel books of the early Victorian epoch which can be read with enjoyment in the present century. Even Mr. W. H. Auden—not always the tenderest of our English poets—refers to it in his *Letters from Iceland* almost in a tone of comradeship. In fact it is a gay book, high-spirited, witty and alert.

My early readings of *Letters from High Latitudes* were marred for me by the uncontrolled enthusiasms of Miss Plimsoll. Her reverence for my uncle became, after that first meeting in Paris, almost paranoiac. True it was that he would treat her as if she were an exiled member of the House of Bourbon and would rise from his chair (that brown hand upon the arm of the chair—that slow and stately smile) whenever she entered. True it is that before prayers he would ask her how she had slept. My brothers and I would descend the sky-lit staircase with a crash and rattle of boyish boots bringing a sense of sudden disorder into that baronial hall. Miss Plimsoll would trip behind us—‘Not so much noise, dears, please, *please*’—and greet my aunt, who would respond with stately shyness. ‘Good morning, Lord Dufferin.’ ‘Good morning to you, Miss Plimsoll. I hope that you have slept well. Your little charges do you credit.’ Her little charges did her nothing of the sort. Seldom can three little boys have been so ragged, so unlaced, so snuffy, so inventive, so tangled, so loud-toned, so inquisitive or so dirty. Miss Plimsoll would incline her head in tribute to that voice which had ruled India with its silken sway. She would walk ecstatically to the leather chair which received her devotions. I

myself would scuttle across to the feet of my Vancouver idol. The servants would enter in a double procession. First would come the butler, the footmen and the men-servants, ending in Albert the hall-boy, and Fergus who did the knives: then followed a second procession headed by the housekeeper, by Miss Thirlby my aunt's maid, by Miss Elsie Macrae my cousin's maid, and thereafter a whole covey of housemaids in their starched print frocks. Monsieur Cochet, the chef, and Raoul the marmiton (being Swiss although Protestant) did not attend. My uncle would adjust his glasses and open the book at the centre table. Slowly he read the collect for the day. We bowed our heads in unison. The soles of fifty varying boots were turned to heaven in prayer.

We were not expected, in Miss Plimsoll's days, to breakfast in the dining-room. My uncle and aunt, and my cousin Hermione, would leave the hall by the billiard-room passage, since, when alone, they breakfasted in the French library, where my uncle kept his pink-bound copies of Gyp. We epigones would clatter up the stairs again on our way to the nursery encampment. It was then that Miss Plimsoll's reverence for my uncle would overflow in rapture.

There was a period, as I have already suggested, when her worship for this great civilian almost deflected her affections from the British Navy. It seemed at one time as if she might cease to impose upon me her exacting standards of marine conduct, and might let me off being an admiral, and allow me to become Viceroy of India. Had it not been for *Letters from High Latitudes* this mood of grace might have developed into something pleasurable and even sedative.

As it was, her perusal of that volume induced her to fuse her passion for my uncle with her passion for the nautical. Never had Miss Plimsoll been so provokingly marine as when we rowed in the dinghy together upon the Clandeboye lakes. She evolved the theory that I, in my bright boyish way, had christened the farther island 'Spitzbergen' and the nearer island 'Iceland'. I had done nothing of the sort. She was always wanting to set a course for Reykjavik whereas my desire was to drive the boat with the full fury of my infant oars into the bank of reeds which fringed the shore. The reeds would crack and split crisply and the prow of the boat would pause for a moment and then retreat backwards slowly as the less damaged reeds reasserted their pressure. Miss Plimsoll thought this game 'silly'. To my mind it was far less silly than her own nonsense about the Arctic circle. And for these reasons my initial attitude towards *Letters from High Latitudes* was one of sullen dislike.

She gave me the book for my eighth birthday, which was spent in Bulgaria. I tried my best to read it but found it well beyond my years. When I suggested this fact to her she assumed that far-off, forgiving expression which went with patient hands folded upon lap, half-closed eyelids, nose slightly uplifted, and resigned sigh.

I do not wish to be unkind to Miss Plimsoll since she taught me the multiplication tables with a mastery for which I am still grateful. Yet when I compare her with my other governesses (with Miss Corrin, for instance, or with Miss Woods) I cannot feel that it was necessary for her to be so insistently inane. Nor, when I look back upon it, was her naval nagging good



for my soul. It produced in me a feeling of constant inadequacy to which I reacted with moods of bump-tiousness. Miss Plimsoll might, or might not, have made an excellent boatswain's mate: she was not an excellent governess. Had she possessed sufficient intelligence to think out other and more congenial forms of sturdiness, I might have been enabled to face my school days with an ardent smile. It was her beastly infatuation for battleships and commodores and picket boats and little midshipmen attacking Chinese bandits armed only with a dirk which made me feel so constantly unshipshape. The fibres of my own virility, such as they were, were by this process twisted into unnatural shapes.

## (4)

When my uncle was dead and lay under a stone slab in the Camp Santo at Clandeboye (that secret cemetery encompassed by the solemn cypresses of the north—that circle of private lawn, the silence of which is broken only by the call of wood-pigeons or the lapping of the lake among the reeds—that secluded dial round which the shadow of the central cross travels with uplifted finger from grave to grave, marking from dawn to evening the passage of generations)—I came to realise that this tender but authoritative patriarch, whom I had known in my childhood at the very summit of magnificence and esteem, and upon whom in my early boyhood had crashed an earthquake of disaster, had once been as multiple and as uncertain as I was myself, and had shared with me the defiance and the tremors, the muscles and the lusts of youth. I then came to read again his *Letters from*

*High Latitudes* and to compare this ardour of vitality, this flaming curiosity of mind, this Byronic clash between romanticism and flippancy, with my own memories of an old man in a chair beside the fireplace, an old man reading Æschylus by the light of a green-shaded lamp, holding the book half-sideways close to his eyes, and from time to time turning with his fine brown hand the pages of the lexicon upon the reading-desk at his side. Would I also become hard of hearing, slow of movement, superbly patriarchal; and would I also one day have to bend forward painfully and crouch sideways at the pages of my Liddell and Scott? One thing alone appeared to me to connect the two portraits, namely the gentle irony (which was not always wit and seldom humour) of his narrative; and as I read the high-spirited account of his adventures in the Arctic I could recapture the inflexions of his tone; and through those printed lines I could hear again the slow and silken cadences of his lisping voice.

The book lies before me as I write, and when I turn the pages I am able to catch some echo of his excitement and of my own awakened curiosity when I first reread the *Letters* at the age of twenty-two.

The whole expedition was dedicated to his friends the Duke and Duchess of Argyll, and it was that lady's effigy (flatteringly portrayed in bronze by Marochetti) which formed the figurehead of the *Foam*. That figurehead was subsequently detached from the prow of the schooner and placed upon the main staircase at Clandeboye, confronting a replica of itself and (while my uncle was alive) edged with a little barricade of ferns and ornamental leaves. During the whole of that Arctic voyage the Duchess of Argyll remained

the guardian angel of the schooner. He addressed her figure-head in a poem of many stanzas, some of which are among the least unsuccessful verses that he wrote :

‘ Anon, a mightier passion stirr’d the deep—  
Presumptuous billows scaled the quivering deck ;  
Up to your very lips would dare to leap,  
And fling their silver arms about your neck ;

The uncouth winds stole kisses from your cheek  
Then, wild with exultation, hurried on  
And boasting bade their laggard comrades seek  
The momentary bliss themselves had won.

Who, following, filled our prosperous sail until  
We reached eternal winter’s drear domain,  
Where suns of June but frozen light distil,  
And, baffled, quickly abdicate their reign.

Yet even here your gracious beauty shed  
Deep calm ; old Ocean slumbered ’neath its spell ;  
And Summer seemed to follow where you led,  
As loth to bid your kindred smile farewell.

The ominous shapes of drifting ice, that pack . . .’

and so on through seventeen stanzas.

The same conceit is echoed at the end of one of the letters from Iceland :

‘ Remember me to . . . (the Duchess of Argyll) and tell her she looks too lovely ; her face has become of a beautiful bright green—a complexion which her golden crown sets off to the greatest advantage. I wish she could have seen, as we sped across, how passionately the waves of the Atlantic flung their liquid arms about her neck, and

how proudly she broke through their embraces, leaving them far behind, moaning and lamenting.'

It was thus fitting that after leaving Greenock he should sail for Loch Goil and that, in the absence of the Argylls, he should have the pleasure of doing the honours of Inveraray to his Icelandic companion Sigurdr. To him he poured out the whole saga of the Clan Campbell. 'I told him,' he records, 'how in ancient days three warriors came from green Ierne, to dwell in the wild glens of Cowal and Lochow—how one of them, the swart Breachdan, all for the love of blue-eyed Eila swam the Gulf, once with a clew of thread, then with a hempen rope, last with an iron chain. But this time alas! the returning tide sucks down the too heavily weighted hero in its swirling vortex. How Diarmid O'Duin, i.e. son of "the Brown", slew with his own hand the mighty boar whose head still scowls over the escutcheon of the Campbells. How in later times . . .'

I have quoted this passage since it contrasts strangely with the lightheartedness of *Letters from High Latitudes* and illustrates that neogothic strain in Lord Dufferin's temperament which caused and justified so many of his later fantasies.

From Loch Goil they crossed to Stornoway and from there over an angry sea to Reykjavik. The passage occupied eleven days and was stormy and adverse. Lord Dufferin, who was himself an expert navigator shared watches with Ebenezer Wyse, the Master, and with William Leverett, the Mate. Yet he was fully conscious of that excellent contrast between the unfamiliar and the intimate, between the

migratory and the static, between the exposed and the protected, which all honest men will confess to be among the major charms of yachting. The following passage shows that with all his romanticism he was open to the franker sensibilities of the realist :

‘ After having remained for several hours on deck, in the presence of the tempest—peering through the darkness at those black liquid walls of water, mounting above you in ceaseless agitation, or tumbling over in cataracts of gleaming foam, the wind roaring through the rigging, timbers creaking as if the ship would break its heart, the spray and rain beating in your face, everything around in a tumult—suddenly to descend into the quiet of a snug, well-lighted little cabin, with the firelight dancing on the white rosebud chintz, the well-furnished book shelves, and all the innumerable little knick-knacks that decorate its walls, little Edith’s portrait looking so serene, everything about you as bright and fresh as a lady’s boudoir in May Fair, the certainty of being a good three hundred miles from any troublesome shore, all combine to inspire a feeling of comfort and security difficult to describe.’

It would be beyond the scope of this study in gradations to tell again the story of Lord Dufferin’s adventures in Iceland ; of the banquet offered to him by the Governor when he gazed with a ‘ lazy wonder ’ at the six glasses before him which he was always emptying but which appeared always to be full ; of the elaborate speech which on that occasion he delivered in Latin ; of his visit to the Geyser of Strokkur ; of his meeting with the Prince Napoleon and of how *La Reine Hortense* took the little *Foam* in tow ; of how he touched Norway, crossed the Arctic circle, and after eleven days among the ice-floes came to anchor in the silent haven of English Bay, Spitzbergen.

He writes of the 'stillness and deadness and impassibility of this new world':

'The sea did not break upon the shore; no bird or any living thing was visible; the midnight sun—by this time muffled in transparent mist—shed an awful, mysterious lustre on glacier and mountain; no atom of vegetation gave token of the earth's vitality; a universal numbness and dumbness seemed to pervade the solitude.'

Nor shall I renew his dissertations upon the structure and geology of geysers and still less shall I follow him either in his researches into Icelandic sagas or into the poems which, under their inspiration, he composed. I shall refrain even from repeating his humorous references to his valet Wilson—whose 'usual state of chronic consternation' recalls the William Fletcher of Childe Harold and Missolonghi—nor shall I reproduce the jocose relations which existed between him and the Captain, Ebenezer Wyse.

I cannot refrain, however, from quoting his description of their first view of Jan Mayen, that surprising apparition the representation of which so puzzled me when I climbed the staircase from the inner hall; a vision which he would constantly reproduce in pencil, in water colour and in oils:

'Hour after hour passed by and brought no change. Fitz and Sigurdr, who had begun quite to disbelieve in the existence of the island, went to bed, while I remained pacing up and down the deck anxiously questioning each quarter of the grey canopy that enveloped us. At last, about four in the morning, I fancied some change was going to take place; the heavy wreaths of vapour seemed to be imperceptibly separating, and in a few minutes more the solid roof of grey suddenly split

asunder, and I beheld through the gap, thousands of feet overhead, as if suspended in the crystal sky, a cone of illuminated snow.

‘You can imagine my delight. It was really that of an anchorite catching a glimpse of the seventh heaven.’

The grandeur of that primæval world aroused in him Homeric emotions such as Mr. Peter Fleming would share, but hesitate to record in print. ‘We seemed,’ he wrote, ‘to have suddenly waked up among the colossal scenery of Keats’ *Hyperion*. The pulses of young Titans beat within our veins. Time itself, no longer frittered down into paltry divisions, had assumed a more majestic aspect. We had the appetites of giants. Was it unnatural that we should also adopt the larger utterances of the early gods?’

Then they turned south again and in the third week in August the little *Foam*, exhausted but unpiloted, slid calmly into Trondhjem fjord. Three weeks later her ducal prow was edging its way through the fishing smacks that bob and jostle in Copenhagen Sound. Lord Dufferin bade a fond farewell to Sigurdr and the crew. He continued his journey overland to Hamburg and from there returned to England.

He was thirty years of age.

(5)

It was not only to Sigurdr and his own youth that he said farewell that September morning at Copenhagen. Standing there upon the Knippelsbro Bridge he could look back upon those months of tempest and uncertainty and forward to the compelling and all too uncertain duties of his position. It is to be doubted whether the latter prospect filled him with elation.

Hitherto he had basked in the sunshine of his own brilliant promise, exerting to the full the potent magnet of his charm and gentleness ; savouring, a trifle lazily, the expectations which he had aroused. But now had come the moment when he could no longer rely solely upon his own capacity for profiting from external advantages ; people would soon be asking themselves (his mother, even, would begin to ask herself) whether Lord Dufferin would continue to be promising all his life. It was not the labour of it all that he dreaded, since he was capable of intense bouts of concentration. It was the need of doing ordinary things as if he were an ordinary person ; the need of routine and constant application ; the need, if he was to avoid failure, of evolving from within himself something which would compel success rather than just receive acclamation ; the need of discovering among the silken fibres of his personality some strand of hemp wherewith to tauten his ambition. Did he in fact possess ambition, or only a profound dislike of failure ? It was not wholly fair that his mother, and Lady Palmerston, and Lady John Russell and dear Lady Jocelyn should expect so much. The combat, after all, was his alone.

Was he conscious also that the Crimean War would bring with it a decline of those privileges upon which he set such store ? To us, who from the perspective of another century look back upon that period, it seems as if those three years between 1853 and 1856 marked the moment when the industrial revolution first drove home its iron wedges into the fabric of society. It needed a war and the passage almost of a generation before the Reform Bills shifted the incidence of power from the territorial aristocracy to



the rising middle class. Even in externals it is possible to trace a transition during that decade of 1850 to 1860, and it is a transition from oligarchy to plutocracy. Never, for a young nobleman, would life be quite so privileged or effortless again.

I have before me a miniature of Lord Dufferin painted in the early 'forties while he was still a boy at Eton. The style, or more exactly the point of view, of that miniature differs but slightly from the Hoppners and Raeburns of the previous century. One sees not a schoolboy merely, but the representative of a special caste. In a few years that boy would go to Christ Church where again his life would be differentiated. He would have his meals at a separate table, his fees and his lectures would be based upon a special schedule, he would wear a silken gown and from the centre of his mortar-board would dangle a golden tuft. On leaving Oxford the road to eminence would be cleared of all subsidiary traffic. Did he hesitate to face the vulgarities of a parliamentary election? An English peerage was at once placed at his disposal. Did he desire to obtain some official position? He had but to call at Downing Street to become a Lord in Waiting. Did foreign travel attract him? There was his schooner, with the chintz and firelight in the cabin, and his private physician to care for his health. Was he curious to sample the ardours of warfare? British Admirals and French Generals violated all regulations to do him honour. Did the Arctic circle enthrall him with the silence of its midnight sun? A French frigate, a member of the French Imperial house, were all too glad to take his schooner in tow.

Even in London, even in such a detail as his personal



LORD PALMERSTON AND LADY JOCELYN  
*from a photograph*

attire, he was allowed, and indeed expected, to mark the difference between himself and the professional or commercial classes. His long hair was brushed forward above the ears and scented with bear's grease or Macassar oil. He could still, in 1849, wear a sky-blue tail coat without attracting criticism. His trousers were fastened in equestrian fashion by a strap beneath his instep. His waistcoat was cut low across the stomach and enriched with buttons of enamel. Above it billowed a vast kerchief of black satin secured by two separate pins connected with each other by a thin gold chain. In his yellow silk gloves he would carry a light cane and an enormous hat. The seals at his fob jingled together as he slowly walked.

In the afternoon, in front of 29 Lower Brook Street, would wait the olive green cabriolet which had been specially built for him by Thrupp & Maberly. He would gather the reins together as the little groom swung up behind. Round and round the Park he would drive noting from afar the barouches of his acquaintance, recognizing them not only by their apricot or sky-blue panels, but by the liveries of the two footmen who stood in the rumble behind, or by the vast coats of arms embroidered upon the hammer cloth. The cambric cuffs of his shirt were turned back over the blue sleeves of his coat in the manner of Count d'Orsay. And as he checked his curricle to greet Lady Kinnoul or Mrs. Anson, he would raise his eyes in vague appraisal of the stream of carriages which were filing past. There would be the older chariots, the family barouches, some Stanhope phaeton from the country, perhaps even the new-fangled brougham. There would be recent experi-

ments in carriage construction such as the Dioropha, the Amempton or the Pilentum. For the elderly or the timorous there would be the safe recesses of the Clarence, the heavy stability of the landau, the convenient Sociable, or the half-enclosed Britzka. In and out of these vast heraldic vehicles would flit the phætons and the cabriolets of the gilded youth. The whole Park glittered with the twinkling of varnished wheels, the sheen of heavily encrusted harness, the gold braid upon the hats of the coachmen, the groomed flanks of superb horses, the white silk stockings of the footmen, the buckskin breeches of the tiny grooms. And then back to Carlton Gardens where he would take tea with Lady Palmerston and learn from Lady Jocelyn what had occurred at Osborne since he left.

## VI

### THE PASSING OF AN AGE

Lord Dufferin and the Industrial Revolution—Nature of his sincerity—His foreign appearance—His kindness—Visit to Egypt and Syria—The Lebanon mission of 1860-1861—Damascus and Beyrout—Death of the Prince Consort—His engagement to Harriot Rowan Hamilton—Archibald Hamilton Rowan—Gawn Rowan Hamilton—His marriage and return to Clondeboyne—His lack of outstanding success in Parliament—His building of Helen's Tower—Death of his mother.

#### (I)

LORD DUFFERIN was not by temperament attuned to the industrial revolution. Not that he was in any sense hostile to the increase of wealth or to the amenities created by scientific and industrial progress. Yet his fundamental conception of society was a territorial conception ; and his Utopia was one in which a small caste of philosopher land-owners would, while maintaining among themselves a high standard of exclusiveness and culture, devote much of their time, and some of their profits, to the physical and religious well-being of their less fortunate brethren. He was at one and the same time fascinated and perplexed by the rapidly increasing mobility acquired by capital under the industrial system. The romance of George Hudson, the high fever of railway speculation which reached its apogee in 1844, had seemed to him while still at Oxford as one of the greatest adventures since the South Sea bubble. The rise of the new plutocracy headed by the Brasseys and the Guests both attracted

and repelled him. Nor did he realise that the handling of stocks and shares required different qualities of acumen, ruthlessness and accuracy to those which sufficed for the management of large estates. To the very end of his life he was (unfortunately) unaware that the competence required of a financier was alien in quality from that inherited by the territorial aristocracy. And he was apt to treat the business man with the same slightly patronising trustfulness which he accorded to the bailiffs and the agents of his estate.

I have often felt that he would have found a wider and far less hazardous scope for self-expression had he been born an illustrious Whig in 1774 and died an illustrious Whig in 1849. True it is that he would have been embarrassed by the activities of the United Irishmen, even as he would have been distressed by the Reform agitation and Sir Francis Burdett. He would have disapproved (at first) of *Lyrical Ballads*, but would sincerely have enjoyed Southey's *Thalaba*. I doubt whether he would ever (had it not been for Richard Monckton Milnes) have heard of Keats, and his main impression of Shelley would have been that Sir Timothy's boy had behaved most strangely in Dublin. Rogers' *Pleasure of Hope* would have seemed to him (as, indeed, it seemed to Rogers) destined for unquestioned immortality. He would have enjoyed the rhetorical passages in *Childe Harold* and the *Corsair*, but his enthusiasm for Byron would have been chilled by meeting him at Melbourne House: of *Don Juan* he would not have approved at all. Yet his marked literary sensibility, his rather advanced taste, would have responded with unbounded enthusiasm to the gospel of Walter Scott. The whole Napoleonic epic

would have paled before the three tremendous events of 1805 and 1810 and 1815. For what was Trafalgar compared to the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, or Wagram to the *Lady of the Lake*, or Waterloo to the *Lord of the Isles*? Then indeed would Clandeboye have been forced, much against its nature, to submit to the ministrations of Sir Jeffrey Wyatville.

Had he moreover been born a generation earlier, he could have enjoyed, without let or hindrance, the delights of being a 'giovane milor stravagante'. He was not equally typical of the more reserved English aristocrat of 1850 to 1900. There was within him a vein of eccentricity, a curious vein of ostentation, a hidden streak of femininity, which made him appear at moments as some exotic pheasant (some *phasianus versicolor*) who had by chance mingled with the browns and russets of East Anglia. The very gait with which he would enter a room with his eye-glass dancing upon its black ribbon before him; the way he would hold his handkerchief as it were of lace rather than of solid Belfast linen; the Grand Trianon manner which he would adopt even to the least alluring ladies; that gradual smile which, had it not been so graceful, might have appeared supercilious; that slow voice, that slower lisp—all these to the sturdy mid-Victorian, appeared, if not definitely un-English, then assuredly not quite 1860 enough.

His brilliance, of course, was widely acclaimed; his wit was often quoted; his diplomatic talents were perhaps unduly stressed; his imperial acquisitions gave the very greatest pleasure. Yet there were those, even in his younger days, even before the death of the Prince Consort, who (scenting something different



from themselves) would attribute his perhaps indiscriminate kindness to a vain desire to please; who would mistake his versatility for something volatile; and who would even doubt the sincerity which lay beneath the surface of his charm. Such people ignored the foundations upon which his character was constructed. They ignored his deep religious feeling or the fact that the Gentleman Commoner who at Oxford had attended chapel twice daily, and whose health had been affected by prolonged fasts, had developed into a man of limpid faith. They did not realise that with all his love for the decorative sides of life; with all his passion for titles, heraldry and ceremonial; he combined the self-discipline of an ascetic, that he never smoked and that he was indifferent (except for his deep hatred of tapioca) to food and wine. They did not observe that under his Sheridan recklessness, under his dislike of routine labour, in spite of a certain Irishness of mind (which prevented him from spelling properly, or dating his letters correctly, or learning foreign languages), he was a cautious rather than an impulsive man; a man who, when urgent need arose, possessed an infinite capacity for taking pains; a man who was horrified by indiscretion even as he was horrified by lack of reticence. Nor did they notice that interesting conflict between his eighteenth-century scorn of flocks and herds, and his nineteenth-century sensitiveness to 'what people thought'; or appreciate the fascinating pattern thus woven throughout his life by the contrasting strands of the conventional and the eccentric. Above all they failed (until they knew him intimately) to appreciate his immense reserves of force.

We children were under no such misapprehensions. He was not, I should now suppose, a man who cared over-much for little boys even when they were clean and silent. All our Easter, and some of our summer, holidays were spent at Clandeboye, since my own parents were then in Morocco. Yet never by the slightest gesture of irritation, never by a momentary lack of response, did he indicate to us that we were anything but the most welcome and honoured guests. There was no insincerity in the kindness which permitted us to be there at all.

It may well be that the impact of his tremendous personality upon my childish mind has left in my memory an impression that I saw much more of him, and knew him far better, than was actually the case. In the early days we had our meals in the nurseries and could only have seen him at prayers or when he paused and exchanged a few words with us in the garden or beside the lake. Yet when we had gone to school and Miss Plimsoll had left us we would have breakfast and luncheon in the dining-room under the picture of Miss Linley and her enormous tree. And in the evenings we would sit with him in the library, poring over volumes of Hogarth or of Doré prints, while he turned the pages of his lexicon under the light of the green lamp.

It is possible also that the general awe which he inspired throughout the household, the boundless veneration with which he was regarded by my aunt and cousins, the prestige he enjoyed throughout the demesne and county, gave us an impression of some theocrat whose slightest whim was respected throughout all Northern Ireland and the Empire. I do not

think, however, that I have exaggerated the force of his personality. My grandmother, who ruled supreme at Shanganagh and with a rod of iron, would refer to him in that flattened tone of voice which she reserved for Queen Victoria or the Primate of all Ireland. My aunt (herself a most authoritative woman) made no attempt in his presence to assert her own powerful individuality. And he was the only person of whom my father was ever known to stand in awe.

It is thus in a mood of spiritual gratitude that I submit my infant hero-worship to the tests of adult experience ; and try to understand that strange amalgam of diffidence and ambition, of impulse and caution, of force and sensitiveness, of flamboyance and simplicity which is so frequently the heritage of those who mingle the Irish with the Scottish blood.

(2)

We left Lord Dufferin standing upon the bridge at Copenhagen contemplating the end of his Arctic adventure, the passage of sweet irresponsibility, and the closing of an age. The gay sands of early-Victorianism had only five short years to run. That December morning was not far distant on which, in the breakfast room at Hawarden, he heard from Mr. Gladstone's lips that the Prince Consort was dead. From that moment the tarlatans and the sarcenets gave place to crêpe and bombazine, the hammer-cloths were removed from the box-seats of the family barouche, the footmen abandoned their rumbles (and within a few years their silk stockings also) the curricles degenerated into dog-carts, and the smoke of factory chimneys

drifted darkly across the sun-drenched lawns of privilege.

Lord Dufferin, it must be admitted, made the most of those last five years. There was a moment, in 1857, when he desired to dash to India for the purpose of suppressing the Sepoy mutiny. 'If it were not,' he wrote, 'for my mother, I would set off to-morrow in order to have a share in avenging these poor ladies.' He restrained this mediæval impulse and remained in Lower Brook Street. Yet he was distressed by the levity displayed by his fellow legislators, who seemed indifferent to the fact that English womanhood had been outraged at Cawnpore. Even to this day (and God grant that it may last) there is something in the spirit of Westminster which discourages heroics. It has nothing to do with cynicism and still less with heartlessness, but is based upon the sane realisation that emotionalism should not pass beyond New Palace Yard. Yet to Lord Dufferin, whose heart beat in unison with that of Quentin Durward, the impassibility of his colleagues seemed inhuman. 'Directly,' he wrote, 'any question, involving no matter what momentous principle, enters the doors of either House, all its virtue seems to leave it, it is never spoken of but with levity, as if blighted by an unwholesome atmosphere. At least, that is the case in the society through which I scramble.'

He consoled himself for such disillusion by taking his mother on a yachting trip to Egypt. They ascended the Nile as far as Assouan, and while Lord Dufferin occupied himself in studying hieroglyphics and purchasing many Egyptian curios and a few works of art, his mother spent her time writing a gay parody of

her son's already famous book entitled *Lispings from Low Latitudes*.

It is one of the tragedies of humour that once it has lost its freshness it becomes jocose. In this skit Helen Lady Dufferin tells of how Miss Impulsia Gushington, an English spinster of excellent family, arrived in Egypt complete with comic maid and comic dragoman : of how she was robbed continuously, first by her compatriots and then by the Egyptians ; of how, having been despoiled of everything except the frame of her crinoline, she eventually returned to Cairo a wiser and more experienced woman. I should not wish to feel that these *Lispings* were the only memorial of Lord Dufferin's mother. There are her songs and verses which, as I have already noted, are worth far more than the mænad cries of her most irritating sister. And there are a few stories and letters in which her sprightliness becomes real vivacity and her vivacity lives again for us with all its radiant charm.

There is a story, incorrectly attributed to Mrs. Norton, of how her host, at some party, asked her permission to present an admirer who 'was dying to meet her'. Lady Dufferin clasped her hands and closed her eyes in momentary prayer. 'Oh God,' she murmured, 'please make me worth meeting.' There is the story (again ascribed to Mrs. Norton) of how, when paying an afternoon visit, she glanced at the clock. 'Gracious !' she exclaimed, 'it's a quarter to six. Please call my carriage immediately.' 'That clock,' they answered, 'is, we fear, a quarter of an hour slow.' 'Then call me two carriages,' was her answer.

And there is the following letter to her son which

illustrates the gaiety of their companionship and explains what he meant when he said of her ' But we were young together : we shared our youth ' :

' I have taken advantage of Kennedy's temporary absence to make a raid into your room, and have taken thence two volumes which belong to me ! It is a pity that men do not perceive what little advantage they gain by " violent and roguish havings ". *De male quaesitis vix gaudet tertius haeres* . . . Austin defines covetousness "*quarum libet inhonestam et insatiabilem cupiditatem*". Chrysostom calls it a " madness of the soul " ; Gregory " a torture " ; Budæus " an ill habit " ; Talleyrandus, the French philosopher, " un Défaut " ; Samuel Oxfordensis " a custom to be avoided or concealed " .

' When these many and great authorities all set their faces against the practice of appropriating other men's effects, why, *o puercule mi*, do you persist in cribbing my Burton ? But this time I have got it safe at the bottom of my deepest imperial, and force alone shall deprive me of it. You may observe that its sudden return into my possession has somewhat coloured my style.'

From Cairo, where Lord Dufferin had an audience with Said Pasha ( ' a good-natured, irascible, bustling, childish man ' ) they went to Cnidos, Smyrna and Constantinople ; his mother then returned to England, and Lord Dufferin, with his friend Cyril Graham, continued his journey to Mount Athos, Beyrout, Damascus, Jerusalem and Athens. This expedition to Syria (which would never have taken place but for a chance meeting with Cyril Graham in a Cairo hotel) proved the first step on that imperial ladder which in after years he ascended with such mastery. He himself believed in freaks of destiny. ' Indeed,' he wrote some forty years later, ' my whole life has been a series of

surprises from the day when Lord John Russell proposed that I should be a Lord in Waiting.'

(3)

This book is a study in transitions ; it is not the history of a great public servant. It is interesting, of course, to observe the part played by chance or coincidence in a career which might appear so carefully planned, so meticulously considered. Yet I am not primarily concerned with that career. I am concerned only with a complex personality.

It is important, none the less, to indicate in what manner Lord Dufferin's reputation as an imperial diplomatist was based upon his Syrian mission of 1860-1861. The point can be made quite shortly. The Syrian mountains were, and are, inhabited by two warring sects. In the north there were the Maronite Christians, whom the French, relying upon a charter of St. Louis, claimed as French protected persons. In the south there were the Moslem Druses who (with no justification whatsoever) regarded themselves as under the protection of Great Britain. In May of 1860 a fierce conflict broke out between the Christian and the Moslem sects ; the Maronites were completely defeated ; and the triumphant Druses spread fire and slaughter throughout their villages. The Turkish Governor and the Turkish forces adopted an attitude of neutrality, somewhat biassed in favour of their fellow Moslems. The wave of massacre spread to Damascus and the lives of Europeans were endangered. The French Government, supported by the Prussian and Russian Governments, pressed for European intervention. Lord Palmerston, much

against his will, agreed that a French expeditionary force might be sent to Syria, and that an international commission should visit Damascus. The Sultan, for his part, despatched Fuad Pasha as special commissioner armed with full powers.

Owing to his recent chance visit to the Lebanon, Lord Dufferin was regarded by his fellow politicians as an expert on the Near East. He was thus recommended to Lord Palmerston as the ideal person to serve as the British member of the International Commission. He was told to leave at once for Damascus and to get into touch with Fuad Pasha.

The general instructions which Lord Dufferin received from Lords Palmerston and John Russell were to the effect that, while not committing Great Britain to any responsibilities in Syria, he should do his best to prevent any other European Power establishing political influence over that country. His specific task was to fix responsibility for the massacres, to provide for some system of government which would render their repetition unlikely, and to reach an agreed settlement such as would enable the French, without too much loss of face, to withdraw their expeditionary force.

He tackled the first of these problems with rapidity and strength. He had reached Damascus in advance of the other Commissioners and a more conventional diplomatist would have waited until his colleagues had arrived before opening negotiations with Fuad Pasha. Lord Dufferin did not wait: he visited the Pasha immediately. He found, as he had foreseen, that the Sultan's envoy was quite prepared to throw the blame either on the Druses or the Maronites, but hoped to



enlist Lord Dufferin's assistance in exculpating the Turkish officials who had, by their negligence, been mainly responsible, if not for the Lebanon massacres, then at least for the outrages which had taken place in Damascus itself. It was clear to Lord Dufferin that the main purpose of this manoeuvre was to split the Commission from the outset into a Druse camp versus a Maronite camp, with England leading the former and France the latter. He therefore, at his very first interview, insisted upon Turkish responsibility, and induced the Pasha at once to execute those officers whose guilt was beyond question. In this manner he was able, before the rest of the Commission arrived, to seize the initiative, to place the problem of responsibility and atonement upon a Turkish rather than upon a tribal basis, to emphasise the theory of the Sultan's sovereignty, to disassociate himself from the charge of being either pro-Druse or anti-Maronite, and to give Fuad Pasha the fright of his life.

Having in this way won the first trick, he rode back to Beyrout. He started early, passing through the orange groves which are watered by the Abanah and the Pharpar (rivers of Damascus), and then climbed the Anti Lebanon resonant with the smell of thyme. From there he dropped down into the valley of Heliopolis, leaving upon his right the great temple of Antoninus Pius, and up again over the Lebanon till he reached that high point above the pines of Brumana where the Mediterranean hangs its wine-dark curtain half-way up the sky.

On returning to Beyrout he found that the rest of the Commission, to say nothing of 8,000 French troops under General Beaufort, had arrived. He assured them

that full atonement for the outrages had already been secured, and that they must now pass to the second item on the programme, namely the new regime for Syria. The French urged that the Lebanon should be constituted a separate province under a Maronite Christian and therefore indirectly under French protection. Lord Dufferin contended that the sovereignty of the Sultan should be emphasised, that the whole province of Syria should be placed under a Viceroy nominated by the Sublime Porte, and that the Lebanon should be administered separately by a Pasha subordinate to the Viceroy. It may be doubted whether he ever supposed that this extreme solution would be accepted by the French, or even by the British, Government. The Sultan (to whom a viceroyalty suggested Ibrahim Pasha and the loss of Egypt) would not hear of allowing so vast an Arab province to slip from his immediate control. Yet the proposal had its merits, if only because its subsequent abandonment obliged the French to mitigate their own proposal. A compromise was thereby effected whereby the Lebanon should be placed under a special régime and ruled by a Governor appointed by the Sultan who, although a Christian, should not be a native of the district. This compromise, strange to relate, worked admirably until the outbreak of the European War.

Lord Dufferin's third task was to induce the Emperor Napoleon and General Beaufort to withdraw their troops. He was not unaware of the difficulty of securing such evacuation. On the one hand French opinion would be humiliated were this expeditionary force to return to Marseilles without ever having unsheathed its sword. On the other hand there was the danger

that, once the transports had sailed from Beyrout, renewed troubles would break out in the Lebanon :

‘ In insisting,’ he wrote, ‘ upon the evacuation of Syria by the French we have taken upon ourselves a very great responsibility, and as it will have been on the strength of my representation that our Government will have based its opinion, or at all events as it will be on me that all the blame will fall if any disaster occurs, I am naturally very anxious.’

It was his constant persuasive pressure on General Beaufort which induced that gallant, but not unreasonable, soldier to realise that the withdrawal of his troops, so far from being a slur upon French honour, would be a superb demonstration of *la mission civilisatrice de la France*. This pressure was supported by stronger language held by Lord Palmerston in Paris. The troops were withdrawn.

Yet when, twenty-three years later, a British expeditionary force landed in Egypt, not all the blandishments of the Quai d’Orsay could induce Lord Dufferin or Downing Street to agree that their withdrawal, on the analogy of that of the Syrian expedition in 1861, would be a fine international gesture. Lord Dufferin replied that British troops would only be withdrawn from the Nile when internal order had been assured. They are there to this day.

On his return to England he was warmly congratulated upon the success of this mission not only by the Prime Minister but by the Queen herself. Stimulated by these eulogies and by the excellent press that he received, he decided for a while to become an English squire. He went to Melton accompanied by

'six horses in beautiful order' but there was a hard frost lasting for several days ; he was bored to extinction ; nor was he ever a sufficient sportsman to brook the long delays, the endless idle waiting, which such pastimes involve. He drove to Chatsworth and from there to Hawarden. It was upon his shoulders that fell, a few weeks later, the arduous duty of moving the address of condolence upon the death of the Prince Consort. 'No cheering,' he wrote, 'no expression of either dissent or approval, but one long *agony* of solitary exertion, which lasted for about five and fifty minutes, at the end of which I found myself reading the address it was my duty to move.' Yet the speech was a success and brought his name into further prominence. On the very next afternoon he was offered the Governorship of Bombay. He took three days to consider this offer and then rejected it :

'If I had gone,' he wrote to the Duchess of Argyll, 'my mother would have been after me in six months ; and if she had come the climate would have killed her—heat being more fatal to her condition than anything else. Am I not a dutiful son ? For I am very ambitious, and would risk anything myself in order to do something.'

Was this the only reason ? His mother approved of his refusal mainly because his absence would have removed him 'from the political stage, where I hope he may yet play a part'. The word 'yet' is significant.

And then there was Harriot Rowan Hamilton of Killyleagh.

(4)

I have already recounted the blood-stained story which had for centuries connected and antagonised

the Hamiltons and the Blackwoods. In the years that had passed between 1677 and 1862 the fortunes of the Blackwoods had marvellously prospered, whereas those of the Hamiltons had in comparison declined. It remained for Archibald Hamilton, my great-great-grandfather, to imperil all that was left to the Hamiltons of the Clanbrassil heritage.

He was not, I suppose, a very cautious man. At Cambridge he threw his tutor into the Cam and was rusticated for changing the signposts on the Newmarket Road. He wasted not only his own inheritance but also a large fortune which he derived from his maternal grandfather, William Rowan. He fell under the influence of Marat Tone, joined the United Irishmen, was betrayed by a Government spy of the name of Cockayne, was thrown into Dublin Newgate and condemned to be hanged. He then managed to bribe the under-gaoler, to reach his own house in Dominick Street, to leave that house again by the back window, and to find a boat ready to ship him to France. A reward of £2,000 was offered for his apprehension, but the sailors refused to betray him. He thereafter reached Paris, had a most amicable conversation with Robespierre, and was given apartments in the Palais Royal at the cost of the Comité du Salut Public. The fall of Robespierre put him again in a dangerous position and he escaped from Paris by rowing himself down the Seine in a Thames wherry-boat, which he had purchased at the sale of the Duc d'Orléans effects. From Havre he sailed to America and eventually reached Philadelphia, from where he moved to Wilmington, Delaware.

Up to this point my feelings for my rebel ancestor

are warm indeed. What I regret is that he was not strong enough thereafter to conquer the pangs of home-sickness or the utter boredom which Wilmington inspired. He began to abjure his former revolutionary feelings, to urge his wife to petition the English Government on his behalf and to write what I regret to say can only be described as wheedling letters to such former friends as Lord Clare, the Beresfords and the Duke of Bedford. Ten years after his condemnation the sentence of outlawry was reversed and he returned to Killyleagh under a promise of good behaviour. Even this promise he failed to keep. He was one of the first persons to whom Shelley addressed himself during that memorable visit to Dublin, in 1812, and he became a warm supporter of Catholic emancipation and a subscriber to the Catholic Association. This brought upon him an attack in Parliament when he was dubbed 'an attainted traitor' by Sir Robert Peel and 'a convicted traitor' by Mr. Dawson, the Member for Kerry. Although in his seventy-fourth year, he challenged Mr. Dawson to a duel but remained satisfied with an explanation. He died in Leinster Street, Dublin, on November 1, 1834 'in charity with all mankind, and wishing Ireland and the whole world happiness and free institutions'.

I never found among my maternal relations anyone who was at that date willing to share my delight in Archibald Hamilton Rowan. They had read his autobiography but did not find it as entertaining as I did myself. They objected to the fact that he added the surname Rowan to the name of Hamilton, a suffix which, in the next generation, was immediately reversed. They regretted that he should have flirted

so blatantly with the scarlet woman of Rome, whereas his plots against the Government of Mr. Pitt, his conspiracies with the Paris Jacobins, filled them with acute distaste. And even I admit that in many ways he was a weak, volatile and a most vainglorious man.

His son, Gawn Rowan Hamilton, was a more reputable figure. As Commodore in the *Cambrian* during the Greek War of Independence he did much to mitigate the barbarities of that conflict and he exercised a moderating influence upon the Greeks and Turks alike. 'He was,' records Finlay, 'the first public advocate of the Greek cause among Englishmen in an influential position and he deserves to be ranked among the greatest benefactors of Greece.' To this day his portrait hangs in the Greek National Museum, and there is a street in Athens called after his name.

His eldest son, Archibald Rowan Hamilton, died at Killyleagh in 1860 at the early age of forty-two, leaving a widow, four sons and three daughters. The youngest daughter (she was a fortnight old at the time) was my mother. The eldest, who was seventeen when her father died, became the wife of Lord Dufferin.

They had known each other since her childhood, for he and her father were not only kinsmen but intimate friends. It was to her father that on coming of age he had presented the Killyleagh Gate House in return for that annual tribute of a rose and spur. And after her father died he would come frequently to Killyleagh, would advise her mother regarding the management of the estate, and would walk with her under the battlements among the nectarines and the heavy French pears, noting her shy dignity and the timid distinction of her lovely face.



THE RETURN AFTER THE WEDDING

*From a contemporary water-colour*



In the autumn of 1862 they were married by Dr. Hincks (the celebrated Egyptologist) in the drawing-room at Killyleagh Castle. They then entered a barouche complete with postilions and outriders and drove the twelve miles to Clandeboye amid the plaudits of the peasantry. They had each of them, for the purposes of the reception at Clandeboye, retained their wedding garments, and Lord Dufferin looked magnificent with the ribbon of St. Patrick across his waistcoat and the star of the same order glittering on his breast. On entering the gallery at Clandeboye a noble sight met their eyes. The room was lined with the school children of the district suitably arrayed in white. Flowers were strewn at their feet as they entered and one of the smallest children advanced to recite an ode of welcome. That little girl, now Mrs. Reid of Craufordsburn Inn is, I am glad to say, still alive. She can repeat from memory the verses which she declaimed on that occasion.

He had prepared for his bride a boudoir in the style of the French Renaissance and a dressing-room enlivened with copies of the more decorous among the Pompeii frescoes. She was nineteen years of age.

(5)

It is interesting to observe, when examining the lives of sensitive but ambitious men, how seldom they float onwards upon some continuous tide of fortune and how frequently success comes to them in a series of intermittent waves. In Lord Dufferin's life there was that first sparkling wave which thrust him into prominence when he was twenty-three and which thereafter receded leaving his mother to wonder

whether he would 'yet' achieve political success. There was a second wave at the time of his Lebanon mission, but, after his refusal of Bombay, that also receded, leaving him in a parliamentary backwater for a space of ten whole years. True it is that between 1862 and 1872 he held the posts of Under Secretary at the India Office and the War Office. True it is also that when Mr. Gladstone resumed power in 1868, Lord Dufferin was given the sinecure of the Chancellorship of the Duchy. True it is that in the following year he was Chairman of a Government Commission to enquire into the state of military education. Yet at the India Office he had little to do ; his tenure of his War Office appointment was not of long duration ; and his report on military education (although prefaced by a most apt quotation from Xenophon's *Memorabilia*) was to all intents and purposes still-born. Again and again had his name been mentioned for high office and there were moments when the Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland and even the Viceroyalty of India appeared within his grasp. Yet the glorious promise of his boyhood and early youth was not in any satisfactory sense fulfilled until he reached the age of forty-five. And it is a sad reflection that the mother who had watched over him with such radiant devotion died before she could persuade herself that he was not, after all, a failure.

The age of forty found him still a minor member of the Government bench ; and as the years passed the early Hoppner effect of a young nobleman with a resplendent future faded into a steel engraving in the *Illustrated London News*. In 1871 he decided (in disgust, perhaps, at having been obliged to support

Mr. Gladstone's Irish Land Bill) to abandon politics ; he applied to the Prime Minister for an earldom. He intended, he said, to retire to his estates and to devote the rest of his mortal life to writing a history of Ireland. Mr. Gladstone replied that, much as he would regret to lose Lord Dufferin as a colleague, yet he felt sure that 'the application of your time and powers in the manner to which you incline . . . will be beneficial to literature and to history'. Lord Dufferin obtained his earldom ; but he did not retire from politics. He remained in his office as Chancellor of the Duchy, and instead of embarking immediately upon his History of Ireland he allowed his name to be put forward for the post of Viceroy which, in February 1872, had fallen vacant owing to the assassination of Lord Mayo. India was given to Lord Northbrook ; a month later Lord Dufferin was offered, and accepted, the post of Governor-General of Canada.

## (6)

My own memories of him were so coloured by the gold and crimson of his Viceregal days that I had not, until I examined again the actual chronology of his life, realised the period of comparative disillusion and ill-success through which he passed between the age of thirty and the age of forty-five. In particular the decade from 1862 to 1872 must have been galling to a man of his sensitive loyalty and ambition ; nor can he have relished Mr. Gladstone's strange theories regarding the rights and duties of an Irish landlord, or the false position in which he was placed as a member of Mr. Gladstone's administration who was

also a member of the Irish landowning class. In retrospect, these disappointments and embarrassments must have seemed to him but as a momentary mood of depression; since that decade was for ever branded in his memory by the first and perhaps the greatest tragedy of his life. For in 1867 his mother died.

Six years before, he had built, upon the hill that dominates his home, the Tower which to this day enshrines her memory. The road winds up to it through the woods that he planted, and as one approaches the summit there is a gleam of light among the undergrowth and a sudden clearing upon which the Tower rises slim and strong. There are but three rooms one above the other and at the top a roof-bastion. A stone turret stairway leads from the ground floor where the caretaker has his kitchen and from which the smell of rabbit-stew and potato-cakes creeps into the upper chambers, mingling the living savour of an Irish bothy with the dead scent of closed rooms, of Victorian woodwork, of camphor and of decaying brocades. Upon the first floor there is a bedroom with a small four-poster hung with embroidered curtains. Above it, is the sitting-room with a carved and diapered ceiling, each square of which contains either a coronet or a crest. Upon the walls of this room are hung golden tablets, much stained with damp, upon which are recorded the poems associated with the name of Helen, Lady Dufferin.

There is the poem which she herself addressed to him on 21st June, 1847, when he came of age. She had given him, as a symbol of her love, a Roman lamp of silver inscribed with the words 'Fiat Lux'.

It is around this lamp, and all it meant to her, that the poem has been contrived :

‘ How shall I bless thee ? Human love  
Is all too poor in passionate words ;  
The heart aches with a sense above  
All language that the lip affords :  
Therefore a symbol shall express  
My love—a thing not rare or strange,  
But yet—eternal—measureless—  
Knowing no shadow and no change.  
Light ! which of all the lovely shows  
To our poor world of shadows given,  
The fervent Prophet-voices chose  
Alone as attribute of heaven !

‘ At a most solemn pause we stand,  
From this day forth, for evermore,  
The weak but loving human hand  
Must cease to guide thee as of yore.  
Then as thro’ life thy footsteps stray,  
And earthly beacons dimly shine,  
“ Let there be light ” upon thy way,  
And holier guidance far than mine !  
“ Let there be light ” in thy clear soul,  
When passion tempts and doubts assail ;  
When grief’s dark tempests o’er thee roll,  
“ Let there be light ” that shall not fail !

Upon another wall are some verses by the Duke of Argyll and facing that a neat but high-spirited poem by Robert Browning who, among other literary figures of his time, had been pressed by Lord Dufferin to contribute to this anthology :

‘ Who hears of Helen’s Tower may dream perchance  
How that great beauty of the Scæan Gate . . . ’

and facing that again is the most famous of all the Helen's Tower poems, those ingenious verses which Lord Tennyson supplied to him in October, 1861 :

‘Helen’s Tower here I stand,  
Dominant over sea and land.  
Son’s love built me, and I hold  
Mother’s love in lettered gold.  
Would my granite girth were strong  
As either love, to last as long.  
I should wear my crown entire  
To and thro’ the Doomsday fire,  
And be found of angel eyes  
In earth’s recurring Paradise.’

Lord Dufferin was overjoyed at receiving this neat little poem :

‘It is,’ he wrote to the Laureate, ‘very rare in this world that we poor human creatures can make each other supremely happy, but that is what you have made me . . . After I had sent my letter I felt that the whole subject must remain a blank to you and that I had asked for an impossibility. Indeed I myself scarcely knew what I wanted. I only felt in a blind way that something beautiful might be written, but until your packet arrived I could arrive at no conception of what form it would take. But you have solved the mystery in a manner surpassing all my expectations. The thought is so grand and simple, and my tower speaks in such nervous granite-like words. . . . What I like so too is the quaint Teutonic feeling which somehow seems to me to pervade the lines, at least so I fancy, and that is what I had desired. You have indeed crowned all my Tower and all my wishes, and most grateful am I. Hundreds of years hence, perhaps, men and women, sons and daughters of my house, will read in what you have written a story that must otherwise have been forgotten, and will reckon the kindness you

have done me as one of the most honourable and noteworthy traditions of their line.'

One passes from this musty chamber, from the damp and perhaps forgotten poems which it contains, out again upon the turret staircases and up a short flight of steps to the roof-bastion. There is a sweep of sky around the battlements and the rush of the winds from Scotland. Below, tumble the green fields and white cottages of Ulster and at one's feet the woods and lakes of the Clondeboyne demesne. To the north, across Belfast Lough, rise the hills of Antrim; to the south, shine the wide waters of Strangford and the line of the Mourne Mountains. While to the east, across the North Channel, opens the whole panorama of Scotland, from the Mull of Kintyre to the hills of Carrick and Ayr. And then one closes the door upon that rush of wind and sky and sea, and is alone again upon the damp staircase, conscious of the brooding secrecy of those two silent rooms.

The Tower had been completed and the poems embossed six years before the death of the woman whom they celebrated. In 1866 she developed cancer of the breast and an operation was performed. For a few months it seemed as if all danger was over and she joined him at Clondeboyne 'filled with the delight of living'. She then returned to her pleasant sunlit house at Highgate. She strove desperately to hide the return of her sufferings from those she loved. She died in June of 1867.

## VII

### CANADA

His married life—Harriot Dufferin—Her stateliness—Her visit to Napoleon III and the Empress at Compiègne—They leave for Canada—Arrival at Quebec—Ottawa and Rideau Hall—Lord Dufferin's achievement as Governor-General—Sir Hugh Allan and the Canadian Pacific—A constitutional problem—His solution—British Columbia and the Railway—His tour of B.C. and the Columbia speech—His interest in Canadian life and sports—Lord Dufferin as an Imperial orator—His opinion of the American Idea—Lady Dufferin and Brigham Young—The persistence of the Killyleagh atmosphere—My first platform appearance.

#### (I)

For him this was no ordinary calamity ; nor can the intensity of his sorrow be measured by perfunctory standards. It was as if his whole youth and childhood had been wrenched from his living body by forceps of steel. Thirty years later, as I have said, her name could not be mentioned at Clandeboye except with a lowering of the voice ; and her legend was encompassed by an almost religious aura, so that even the Tower itself had for us the associations of a mausoleum rather than those of a nobleman's folly ; which in fact it was. Even my mother shared this idolatry and yet she had only once, and as a child of six, been taken to Dufferin Lodge at Highgate ; nor did she retain any recollection more vivid than a vague impression of a gracious lady in lace and diamonds with great bowls of pink roses in the room around her. She must indeed have been one of the gentlest and most scintillating of lovely women. And



in the memoir which Lord Dufferin prefixed to her *Songs and Verses* he described her in terms which none of those who knew her would have found exaggerated :

‘ Thus went out of the world one of the sweetest, most beautiful, most accomplished, wittiest, most loving and lovable human beings that ever walked upon the earth.’

It may well have been his adoration for his mother rather than his romantic attachment to Lady Jocelyn which induced him to remain a bachelor until he was nearly thirty-seven years old. It is significant also that the difference in age between his mother and himself was almost identical with that which separated him from Hariot Rowan Hamilton. There seemed some magic for him in that gap of eighteen years, and possibly also some unconscious identification between the girl-mother of 1826 and the girl-wife of 1862. As a boy, he had looked to his mother for that loving protection which was necessary to so sensitive a nature ; as a young man he had found in her that radiant companionship which outshone all his other loves and friendships. His wife, in those middle years of diffidence and uncertainty, strengthened his self-reliance by the very flame of her own faith in him, by the very intensity of her worship ; and as she, in due course, developed from a child-wife into a woman of great ability, she became the counsellor, but never the critic, of his later years.

I was conscious (even as a little boy of eight, with my blue sailor-suit smeared with lake-mud) of some quality in their relationship which was deep and strange. It seemed curious to me, although my

cousins would address their parents as 'Papa' and 'Mamma', my aunt would never refer to my uncle by his Christian name. It seemed curious also that she should suddenly cease speaking the moment he appeared. For he indeed was the sun around which revolved all the planets in her firmament. Even her children were but little moons accompanying (in ever-increasing numbers) that brilliant blazing orb. She was herself an active and independent woman, whose essential tenderness was concealed under a disguise (and it became more than a disguise) of stately reserve. She was a shy woman—as are all the Hamiltons—nor did she possess the faculty of making friendships outside her own family and immediate associates, or of finding attractions other than those which themselves revolved around the lode-star of her life. It was thus with complete abandon, with unquestioning and uncritical fervour that she laid at his feet a passionate store of self-abnegation and humility. Nor do I wish again to witness such agony of human despair as assailed her when he died.

His own attitude was one of old-fashionable chivalry. He would rise when she entered a room and open the door for her when she left. He would pay her little compliments which brought the blush to her cheek. 'Oh little Lal,' he would say when he was over seventy, 'how well that gown becomes you! How beautiful you look to-night!'

I remember an occasion when we were all gathered in the saloon. There were guests for luncheon and my uncle was standing by the great curved window drawing their attention to the sweep of wood and park-land and to the distant turret of Helen's Tower

rising above the trees. She had been delayed by some interruption and entered hurriedly with a slight flush upon her cheek. His glance followed her movements as she crossed the saloon and his eyes danced with pride, affection and delight. He turned to his eldest son who was standing beside him. 'The King of Greece,' he said, 'told his sister—who repeated it to me—that there was no lady in Europe who could enter a room like Lady Dufferin.'

I pondered deeply over this remark. I took it to mean that my aunt possessed some secret mode of entry which she reserved for special occasions and which I had never witnessed. I watched her carefully, pulling at my fingers in impatient anticipation. 'Hush, dear,' Miss Plimsoll hissed in my ear, 'I can hear your knuckles cracking out loud.' Yet the problem remained. It was not possible to conceive that anyone as stately as my aunt could enter rooms (even if the King of Greece had come to luncheon) in any manner that was either ungainly or jocose. There could be no question of her coming in on all fours, or even backwards, or even with a skip and a jump like the fairy in the pantomime. I imagined a slow gliding movement, in the performance of which her feet would remain motionless and glued together like those of the Bavarian lady in the barometer upstairs. Or perhaps she just floated into the room with beneficent arms outstretched like the angel I had seen in the ballet at Buda Pesth. I sat there at the side-table which was reserved for children and governesses and kept my eyes fixed upon my aunt in wild surmise. She was talking amicably to Lord Annesley and to Colonel Sharman Crawford. I left it at that. Yet the

mystery which always encompassed her was thereby increased.

That mystery remains with me to-day. For through what gradations did the slim shy girl of Killyleagh develop into the most stately of all Vicereines? How came it that this Victorian maiden, brought up in the severe but slightly ramshackle atmosphere of an Irish castle, could so suddenly adopt the fastidious elegances of No. 8 Grosvenor Square? And what did she possess, except her beauty, which could compete with the gaiety of Lower Brook Street, the sharp gusto of the Palmerston circle, or the tremendous solemnities of Windsor?

She was obliged to face that transition immediately, and in a most exacting form. Only a few weeks after the honeymoon she was whirled to Paris, and taken out to Compiègne on a visit to Napoleon III and the Empress Eugénie. Did she endure agonies lest her husband might observe some shade of difference between herself and Madame de Castiglione? How did she cope with the Winterhalter atmosphere of that decaying court, or respond to all that taut gaiety and all those practical jokes? Or did she sail through that ordeal, as she sailed through the ninety-three years of her life, displaying to the outer world only a swan-like reserve, a calm authority?

Years afterwards I asked her about that visit to Compiègne. She remembered the long passages lit by china globes, and the way the chamberlains would summon them to meals, and the dresses worn by the Empress Eugénie, and the drives in the forest. 'But, Aunt Lal,' I asked, 'weren't you shy? It must have been a terrible ordeal.' She smiled silently to herself,

searching back along the corridors of memory to those four days, seventy-three years ago, when she had stayed as a young bride at Compiègne. 'Shy?' she repeated, 'but I was always shy. And your Uncle Dufferin, I remember, was much interested by his conversations with the Emperor.'

For they had spoken of Gore House, and of the gorgeous Lady Blessington and of the evening when Lord Dufferin (at that time still an undergraduate) had first met Napoleon III in 1846. They then passed on to politics. 'His manner,' my uncle recorded, 'is very pleasant and soothing from its extreme composure. As he goes on, you can fancy yourself in an arm-chair watching magical wreaths of smoke turning into shape and form over some far-away dreamland. It is this tranquillity of manner which gives him such ascendancy over the volatile French.'

(2)

Seven years did they remain in Canada and those years were among the happiest of their lives. On June 25, 1872, the S.S. *Prussian* dropped anchor in the St. Lawrence and to the thunder of the Quebec batteries they set foot upon the first of those red carpets which became for them thereafter the inevitable symbol of arrival or departure. In a carriage and four they drove through the dust and heat of the ancient city, passing under arches of evergreen and bunting, conscious of the jingle of the accompanying escort and of the polite cheers of the assembled crowds. There was Colonel Fletcher of the Scots Fusilier Guards who acted as military secretary. There was Lady Harriet Fletcher, his wife, who assisted Lady

Dufferin at all her ceremonies. There was Captain Coulson, the personal A.D.C. and Mr. Pattison the private secretary. There was Nowell, the English valet, and Mrs. Dent the maid. There was Colonel Strange in command of B. Battery of the Canadian Artillery. There were the Governors of Quebec and Montreal, the Deputy Governors, the Bishops, the Judges and the Members of the Provincial Legislature. And there was the Prime Minister, Sir John MacDonald, who was 'the image of Dizzy'.

From Quebec, two days later, they proceeded by river to Ottawa. They were disappointed by their first sight of Rideau Hall, which, so far from being the Viceregal Palace of their hopes, seemed but 'a two-storied villa with a small garden at one side'. Nor did the official capital of Canada strike them at the time as impressive. It was dusty and provisional, alternating between tin-roofed shanties and mansions as sumptuous and as modern as the Charing Cross Hotel in London. The general impression was one of solitary desolation and incompleteness. Yet with their accustomed optimism they refused to be discouraged. Lord Dufferin, for his part, found much consolation in the 'magnificent Gothic pile of public buildings'. 'I dare say,' Lady Dufferin recorded, 'that in winter this place looks lovely.'

There is no doubt that Lord Dufferin was one of the most popular and successful of all our Governors General of Canada. To this day, in Montreal and Quebec, his name is remembered, whereas the names of other satraps have been forgotten. What was the nature and the cause of the impression which he left behind?

Politically, his course was neither easy nor untroubled. I have no desire, in this portrait of a personality, to weary the reader with forgotten Canadian controversies or to revive political animosities which have long since been stilled. Yet if I am to rescue the Dufferin legend from the laurels which have grown so thickly around it, it is necessary, before I examine the essence of his success, to indicate the sort of problems with which he was confronted.

He arrived at a difficult moment and only a year after the Dominion had been consolidated. As a result of the Durham report, Upper and Lower Canada had been fused together with equal representation in the Legislature. The effect of this fusion was that the political parties were so evenly balanced that a state of chronic instability was provoked. In 1867 the basis of the Dominion had been broadened by union with Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. In 1871 British Columbia and Vancouver also adhered. Yet the inclusion of Manitoba had provoked the rebellion of Louis Riel which had been suppressed, and not without difficulty, by Colonel Garnet Wolseley. True it is that the storms aroused by these controversies had by 1872 almost subsided ; yet they had left behind them a heavy ground-swell which rendered navigation difficult and even perilous. And behind it all were the problems (always endemic in Dominion affairs) of the French minority and of relations with the United States.

His main difficulties arose over the Canadian Pacific Railway. Two groups competed for this tremendous concession and the Prime Minister, Sir John Macdonald, brought strong pressure upon these groups

in order to induce them to fuse together into a third group of which Sir Hugh Allan was chairman. The opposition, at this, accused the Prime Minister of favouring Sir Hugh Allan from whom, they alleged, he had received a generous donation to party funds. A Committee was appointed to investigate this accusation and the Dominion Parliament passed a Bill enabling this Committee to examine witnesses on oath. Lord Dufferin gave his assent to this Bill, but the Cabinet of Sir John MacDonald decreed that it was *ultra vires*. A direct issue was thereby raised between the Prime Minister and the Governor-General. The former urged His Excellency to prorogue Parliament and by so doing to stifle the Committee at birth. The opposition argued that such action would be favouring the Government in power and urged that the Governor-General should prolong the life of Parliament until the Committee had made its report.

This dispute aroused fierce popular passion, and Lord Dufferin was accused of favouring the party in power. He was on a tour in Nova Scotia at the time, but was obliged to return immediately to Ottawa. His reception, as he passed through Halifax, was cold in the extreme. On arriving at the capital, he decided to accord Sir John MacDonald's demand for prorogation, but he limited the period of prorogation to two months. His decision was greeted with groans and hisses. 'I am not sorry,' he wrote to Lord Kimberley, the Colonial Secretary, 'to have an opportunity of showing them that, however anxious I may be to be gracious and civil, I do not care a damn for anyone when a matter of duty is involved.'

That was a noble sentiment; but the real difficulty



was to tell where his duty actually lay. By proroguing Parliament, the Governor-General had in fact dissolved the Committee of enquiry. 'I could not,' he explained, 'have treated Parliament as a pregnant woman and prolonged its existence for the sake of the lesser life attached to it.' Yet obviously, in view of the suspicions aroused against Sir John MacDonald, some sort of investigation was essential. Lord Dufferin therefore appointed a judicial and non-party committee to examine the evidence, and the findings of that Committee did in fact show that Sir Hugh Allan had subscribed largely to Sir John MacDonald's funds. The latter was obliged to resign; Mr. MacKenzie, leader of the opposition, took his place; and Lord Dufferin found, not only that he had regained his popularity, but that he had impressed the Canadian public with his capacity for taking decisions on his own. 'It is,' he commented, 'an infinitely prouder and better thing for Canada that the Dominion should have purged the scandal through the action of her own Parliament than by the intervention of an Imperial officer.' Yet in fact it was the Imperial officer who had prepared and administered the purge.

This was not the only controversy in which he became involved owing to the Canadian Pacific. In joining the Dominion in 1871 British Columbia had made it a condition of union that the trans-continental railway should be completed within ten years. It was obvious that the Dominion Government would be unable to execute this promise, and British Columbia in 1874 appealed to the Colonial Office who drafted a compromise thereafter known as the 'Carnarvon Terms'. The legislation introduced by Mr. Mac-

Kenzie's Government in 1876 indicated that they had no intention of giving effect to that compromise and British Columbia exploded in rage. Lord Dufferin employed all his powers of conciliation to prevent an open rupture but without avail. He decided to visit British Columbia himself and journeyed across the continent via Chicago, Omaha and San Francisco. At the latter port he embarked upon H.M.S. *Amethyst*, called at Esquimaux, and thereafter continued to Victoria. News was brought to him that one of the triumphal arches which had been erected for his reception bore the provocative legend 'Carnarvon Terms or Separation'. He begged them to change the initial 'S' of that last disruptive word into the more palatable letter 'r'. They would accept no such transliteration. Dufferin refused therefore to drive by the route which was spanned by such defiance. His refusal made a salutary impression. He followed up that impression by what was known in Canadian history as 'the great Columbia speech'. This speech was delivered at Government House, Victoria, on September 20, 1876, and the meeting lasted for two and a half hours. He told them that he had not come charged with any message from the Imperial or the Dominion Government, nor had he come to 'persuade or coax' them into any line of action not conducive to their own interests. He had come solely to cultivate 'friendly and affectionate relations', and to listen to their point of view. 'Far be it from me,' he said, 'to belittle your grievances or to speak slightly of your complaints.' He admitted that the Dominion Government had failed to carry out their engagements, but he asked his audience to consider as sensible men

whether, in having neglected to do so, they had been guilty of a wilful breach of faith. And he then embarked upon a practical defence of the Dominion's difficulties and an appeal for wisdom and for patience. There was thereafter little talk of separation. Yet it should be noted that the railway did not reach the Pacific till 1887.

(3)

I have included this sketch of his main difficulties in Canada since they furnish an excellent specimen of his administrative and diplomatic method. That method was to sandwich his resolution between two layers of charm; he would prepare the ground with the utmost solicitude and, by the exercise of his unrivalled powers of conciliation, reduce the issue to some essential point of principle; he would then, very cautiously, make up his own mind upon that principle and, having once acquired conviction, would act with speed, forcefulness and determination; having won his point, he would then quickly repair the ravages of his victory by applying the unguents of friendliness and by convincing his opponents that the real victory had been theirs and not his. It was this remarkable combination of the rigid and the elastic which was the secret of his success.

Yet all this does not explain how he was able, during those six years, to win the confidence of the Canadians and to master their appalling touchiness. To some extent his success was due to the frankness and humour with which he would discuss with them the delicacy of his own position. At Halifax, for instance, at the very height of the MacDonald-

MacKenzie crisis, he spoke of the unpleasantness of having his name dragged into the party turmoil and of hearing it said that the Governor-General possessed his political favourites and his political bugbears :

‘ Under these circumstances,’ he said, ‘ he must console himself with the reflection that these spasmodic castigations are as transitory and innocuous as the discipline applied occasionally to their idol by the unsophisticated worshippers of Mumbo Jumbo when their harvests are short or a murrain visits their flocks.’

This analogy was at the time regarded as too pointed to be pleasant, and the laughter which it evoked was of the frigid variety ; yet the point went home.

In 1877, again, at the National Club at Toronto he made allusion to the same theme. He compared the Governor-General to :

‘ the humble functionary we see superintending the working of some complicated mass of chain-driven machinery. This personage merely walks about with a little tin vessel of oil in his hand and he pours in a drop here and a drop there, as occasion or the creaking of a joint may require ; while his utmost vigilance is directed to no higher aim than the preservation of his wheels and cogs from the intrusion of dust, *grits*, or other foreign bodies.’

Yet it was not only by taking the Canadian people into his confidence that he established his influence ; it was by his amazing social activity, by his lavish entertainment, by the identification of himself and his family with all Canadian interests and pursuits, that he created a legend which to this day survives.

His first aim was to enter into contact with every section of Canadian opinion. Not only did he undertake tours through every province, but he established

himself for long periods in Quebec, Montreal and Toronto. He built himself a little house at Tadousac which furnished a happy escape from the dust and politics of Ottawa and a convenient dumping ground for his children. At his own expense he repaired the citadel at Quebec and rendered the existing officers' quarters worthy of a Governor-General's residence. For months on end they would reside in what Lady Dufferin called 'my barrack home', giving an unbroken series of receptions and dinner parties upon the wide bastion-terrace which looks down upon the roofs of the old city and the shipping of the St. Lawrence. The record of their entertainments leaves one aghast. There were drawing-rooms, picnics, receptions, 'drums', dinners, balls, torchlight processions, garden parties, bazaars, regattas, and amateur theatricals. There were concerts also and carefully prepared *tableaux*. 'The first part of the programme,' Lady Dufferin records, 'consisted of vocal music by amateurs. Then Rosa d'Erina sang four songs capitally. Three very pretty *tableaux* closed the entertainment: The Death of Cleopatra; the Expulsion of Hagar; and a group of flower girls. Nelly being one of them.'

News of all this lavishness reached England and the Duke of Argyll became perturbed. 'I hear,' he wrote, 'terrible things about your expenditure. People say that you will be entirely ruined. Do not be too Irish or too Sheridanish; it is an awful combination.' This ruination, however, did not occur until more than twenty years had passed.

It was not so much by the reckless expenditure of his personal fortune that he won the heart of the

Dominion as by the zest with which he flung himself into Canadian interests and pastimes. Day after day he could be seen skating, sleighing, tobogganing, snow-shoeing, or in summer fishing at Tadousac or sailing his cutter in and out of the shipping of the St. Lawrence. He became particularly adept at curling, spending hours in the little curling rink at Montreal, which to this day is plastered with photographs of his matches or of the competitions which he encouraged. Nor was he unappreciative of their natural and historic beauties; he was lavish in his praise of the national park created by Frederick Olmstead on Mount Royal, and it was he who was mainly instrumental in rescuing from destruction the ancient walls and fortifications of Quebec. And with it all there was his gentle affability; the way that he would talk to casual people as if their personal affairs were the most important in the world; that slow smile and that atrocious accent with which he would convince a French Canadian that he was not a member of a persecuted minority but a pioneer of culture in the New World.

Above all he was able to gratify the Canadians by his vivid sense of their romantic past, his imaginative conception of their imperial present, and his visions of the great future which would be theirs:

‘It may be doubted,’ thus ran the peroration of one of his speeches, ‘whether the inhabitants of the Dominion are themselves as yet fully awake to the magnificent destiny in store for them. . . . Like a virgin goddess in a primæval world, Canada walks in unconscious beauty among her golden woods and by the margin of her trackless streams, catching but broken glances of her

radiant majesty as mirrored on their surface ; and scarcely reckes as yet of the glories awaiting her in the Olympus of nations.'

In this picturesque manner did Lord Dufferin (who had never been an effective parliamentarian) become one of the most resounding of imperial orators. Nor is it surprising that having won the confidence of Canada and fired her imagination, his departure in August, 1878, should have been celebrated with universal regret.

(4)

In the intervals of his arduous duties at Ottawa, Lord Dufferin found time to pay several visits to the United States. It cannot be said that he was ever inspired by passionate enthusiasm for the American Idea. He appreciated their kindness, he admired their enterprise and he was touched by their courtesy. Yet he was unable to respond with any warm impulse to their doctrine of egalitarianism. 'Monotony,' he wrote after a visit to Boston, 'is the incubus of this continent'. 'Already,' he wrote to Lord Carnarvon, 'the social, political and intellectual monotony which pervades America is very oppressive ; and one shudders to think of this gigantic area becoming possessed by an enormous population of units as indistinguishable from one another as peas in their habits of thought and conduct.'

Lady Dufferin, on the other hand, much enjoyed her visits to the United States. She appreciated the hotels and was in particular much impressed by the Palmer House at Chicago :

‘It is,’ she wrote in her journal, ‘a palace; marble staircases, broad passages handsomely carpeted, and furnished with crimson satin sofas and chairs; chimney pieces from Italy in lofty rooms also beautifully furnished; pier glasses—every luxury in fact. Each bedroom opens into a sitting-room and off mine there is a bath-room with hot and cold water laid on. The bedroom has velvet-pile carpets with Aubusson patterns, plain crimson curtains, and chairs—such as I wish I had in my drawing-room at Clandeboye.’

She liked Boston and her visit to Longfellow. ‘The poet’s study,’ she recorded, ‘is a plainly furnished room, with a large orange tree standing in one window.’ Even Lord Dufferin enjoyed his dinner with Longfellow when he met Lowell, Emerson and Oliver Wendell Holmes. Yet in New York Lady Dufferin walked out of a theatre when she saw signs of the play taking an improper turn, and at Salt Lake City she refused, rather curtly, to be presented to Brigham Young. ‘Our host,’ she records, ‘asked whether we wished to see the Tabernacle of the Mormons and if we wished an interview with Brigham Young; this last honour we declined. D. declares that it made me quite irritable even to be in his vicinity; and I think it did.’

This passion for monogamy was part, of course, of the Killyleagh tradition. It has always struck me as strange that both my aunt and my mother who, in different manners, left Killyleagh when they were scarcely more than children, should throughout a life spent in the courts of Europe and in the palaces of Empire have retained on all such matters the prejudices of a small Presbyterian town. True it is that my



mother—who was seventeen years younger than Lady Dufferin—was never (except in regard to vestments, dogs, Mr. Gladstone, cosmetics, Mr. Birrell, high church tendencies in curates, *la haute couture* and Lord Oxford and Asquith) quite so bigoted as her sister. I doubt whether, if pressed by a skilful cross-examiner, she would put up any very spirited defence of the Old Testament or contend with any passion that the world was really created in six days, that Noah really launched his joy-boat, or that the stories of Joseph and his brethren, or Jael and Sisera, are valuable moral tales to read to children. I have observed in her, moreover, a certain slackening of moral fibre in regard to divorcées and a readiness to admit that these fallen women may perhaps also be permitted (if wholly innocent) to enter the kingdom of heaven. My aunt allowed herself no such laxities. Throughout her long life the principles and standards which she had learnt at her mother's knee remained immutable, even after they had been violently repudiated by my grandmother herself. In their defence she was as Bellona, armed for war.

Throughout my boyhood she loomed as a formidable figure—reserved, placid and aloof. To me her slim stateliness of form and movement, the symmetry of her level brows, recalled the unknown lady of Verlaine's too hackneyed sonnet :

‘ Son nom ? Je me souviens qu’il est doux et sonore  
Comme ceux des aimés que la vie exila.

Son regard est pareil au regard des statues,  
Et, pour sa voix, lointaine, et calme, et grave, elle a  
L’inflexion des voix chères qui se sont tues.’

It may well be that my early memories of her were affected by my mother's devoted trepidation and by the many years through which my aunt moved listless and dispirited in widow's weeds. I confess that I find it difficult to adjust my childhood's picture of her to my recent memories of an autocratic, alert and humorous old lady of ninety. And to her grandchildren, who were ten years younger than myself, she seemed always the most stimulating of companions—affectionate, passionately interested, and gay.

I can recall, none the less, even from the time of my boyhood, certain surprising moments when she would discard her stateliness and appear wholly different. Such moments were always connected with some form of travesty, whether charades, dumb-crambo, practical jokes even, or merely dressing up. It was as if the more human sides of her nature could only escape from their covering of shyness by adopting an impersonal alibi. On such occasions she would lose all rigidity, abandon her deportment and become frivolous and enchanting to the very movements of her eyes and hands. Even so does a stammerer forget to stutter when he sings.

How well do I remember a terrible occasion when, as a child of eight, I was made to recite upon a public platform in Belfast. Some fête or concert had been arranged in aid of the Girls' Friendly Society of which my aunt was president. A telegram arrived at teatime announcing that one of the performers would be unable to attend. My aunt decided that I should fill this gap and that I should recite before the friendly girls a ghastly little ditty which Miss Plimsoll had made me learn by heart. She determined there and

then to give me a dress rehearsal. I was overwhelmed with gloom. She, on the other hand, became suddenly animated and excited. She took me up to her room where the scent of sandalwood spread out from the pompeian cupboards. She sat down and told me to begin.

The poem, if I recollect aright, was Miss Plimsoll's adaptation of a popular dialogue in which some swain woos some nymph with crude offers of reward and in which the nymph replies with modesty and disinterestedness.

‘Madam,’ remarks the swain, ‘I will give you a fine  
    silken gown  
To swell it up and down  
In and out the town  
If you’ll walk with me anywhere.’

These offers are progressively increased until the swain produces the keys of his heart and the nymph thereat undertakes that she will walk with him everywhere. The horror of this recitation was increased by the fact that I had to alternate my manner between that of ardent swain and modest nymph; and that Miss Plimsoll had instructed me in the most shaming gestures of appeal and rejection with which to accompany these foolish amœbæan quatrains.

At my dress rehearsal I repeated the poem sulkily and with the utmost economy of gesture. My aunt, with ardent eyes, watched my performance. She then rose and said ‘Try to do it something like this’. Whereat she ceased to be my aunt and became two separate people (one of them clearly nymph and the other clearly swain) whose antics I watched with

fascinated embarrassment. 'There!' she said gaily, giving me a rare pat of affectionate regard; 'when you get on the platform, all you have to do is to copy exactly what I did.'

Armed with these summary and disheartening instructions, I accompanied the party to Belfast (arrayed in my white, in place of my blue, sailor suit). Along the avenue we drove to Helen's Bay where the train received us and bundled us to Belfast. The whole way to the concert hall I twisted my fingers in agonised apprehension. My brother, who was a kindly soul, endeavoured to reassure me. 'Shut up!' I said; and resumed my solitary distress.

My own turn came towards the end of the performance. I was preceded by Lord Plunket, who gave a comic Irish recitation. It was an enormous success. When the applause subsided I was pushed, poked and propelled on to the platform. The faces of the friendly girls became in the glare of the footlights an amicable smudge. I could observe my aunt's bonnet nodding at me in encouragement. I made a bow to the friendly girls which was received (I am glad to say) with rapturous applause. And then life and love and poetry became an utter blank to me; I ceased to have any conscious control of my limbs or voice; a pathetic automaton, I went through the gestures and the words which my aunt had shown me at the dress rehearsal. I bowed again when I had finished and the friendliness of the girls became positively orgiastic. I staggered down the platform only to be pushed back again amid a universal cry of 'encore'. I repeated that performance. Again my success was incontestable. I regret to say that on the return journey I displayed unmistakable

symptoms of mummer's complacency. My brother was justly incensed. And next morning my aunt presented me with a Kodak complete with two unused films.

## VIII

### DIPLOMACY

Lord Beaconsfield asks him to go as Ambassador to Russia—Mr. Gladstone not pleased by his acceptance—The Reform Club dinner—Russia in 1879—Spontaneous infiltration in Central Asia—The Nihilist menace—The assassination of Alexander II—His holidays in England—His friendship with Bismarck—The visit to Varzin—Bismarck's views upon the condition of Europe—Was Lord Dufferin a great man?—The Egyptian problem as a test of his diplomatic skill—Examination of that problem—Abdul Hamid and Tel-el-Kebir—The Dufferin Report.

#### (I)

ON his return from Canada, Lord Dufferin was faced with a predicament. He received from Lord Beaconsfield a letter, couched in the most unctuous terms, offering him the post of Ambassador to Russia. 'At the moment,' wrote the Prime Minister, 'St. Petersburg is the most important court; and I require a first-class man there.' This was all very well. But Lord Dufferin could hardly ignore the fact that Lord Beaconsfield was the leader of the Conservative Party, whereas he himself had always been a Liberal and one who had been in close and glamorous connection with Mr. Gladstone.

True it was that our relations with Russia were difficult at the time; and that Alexander II had bitterly resented being robbed by the Berlin Congress and, largely owing to the initiative of Great Britain, of the fruits of San Stefano. True it was that Lord Dufferin's famous tact, and the circumstance that he was himself in no way identified with the Berlin policy



HELEN, LADY DUFFERIN. COUNTESS OF GIFFORD

*From an Engraving*

of Lord Beaconsfield, might be excellently applied as a poultice to that resentment. True it was again that seven years in Canada had intervened since the time that he had been a Minister in the Gladstone administration, and that he might now claim the virginity of a Public Servant. True it was also that it was in that rôle that he now began to see himself; that he had almost abandoned parliamentary or ministerial ambitions; and that he was prepared more or less to devote the remainder of his life to being, as he himself expressed it, 'maid of all work to successive cabinets'.

All that was true. Yet in that year 1879 it was not convincing. Lord Beaconsfield's offer was not unaffected by electoral considerations. Already Mr. Gladstone was preparing that 'pilgrimage of passion' which is known to history as the Midlothian Campaign and which in the next year carried him to victory. Already he had moved a vote of censure on the Afghan War and already he had attacked Lord Beaconsfield, and in no measured terms, upon his Russian policy. Already the latter was aware that the cheers with which the crowds in Downing Street had acclaimed 'Peace with Honour' had sunk to muffled murmurs regarding the risks of power-diplomacy and the cost of the Zulu and Afghan wars. Obviously it was necessary for Lord Beaconsfield to send as Ambassador to St. Petersburg someone who would deftly apply the necessary balm to the bleeding wounds of Russia. But was it not a trifle astute of him to choose as his emissary a man who was regarded as the star-turn of Liberal Imperialism, and who had himself been for ten years a staunch henchman of the opposition leader? What made it all so difficult for Lord Dufferin was



that the lights of the Liberal Party had prepared a banquet in his honour ; that banquet was to take place at the Reform Club on February 22.

He accepted both invitations. He told Lord Beaconsfield that he would be delighted to go to Russia ; and he told the Liberals that he would be honoured to attend their banquet. ' There was,' he confessed, ' something rather comical in my position at the Reform Club banquet, and my speech on that occasion was not the easiest that I have had to make.' Yet in fact the Liberals (who were being assailed by Conservative propagandists as Little Englanders) were not at all disinclined to advertise their most successful Imperialist ; and Lord Dufferin was glad to have an occasion on which to justify his accepting a post under Lord Beaconsfield. He assured the Reform Club that the post of Ambassador was one ' which is regarded, and as I think is rightly and conveniently regarded, as lying outside the sphere of party politics at home '. And he at the same time reaffirmed his loyalty to the Liberal Party and his strict adherence to liberal principles. The speech was well received :

' A little constraint ' (wrote *The Times* on February 23) ' was inevitable in the speeches of politicians who have been used to condemn unsparingly the policy of which Lord Dufferin has now become the accredited agent. Lord Dufferin has himself a well-merited reputation for tact ; but his manly candour stood him in better stead than all the subtleties of Talleyrand. He asserted not only his Liberal convictions but his determination to share the political fortunes of his party.'

There remained Mr. Gladstone. Lord Dufferin was uncertain how the Liberal leader, who at the moment

was in a most party mood, would welcome his accepting an appointment from a Conservative administration. He sounded him through the intermedium of Lord Granville :

‘Thanks,’ replied Mr. Gladstone, ‘for your detailed information of a rather peculiar case. I really do not know why Dufferin should consider himself to be under any sort of obligation to me. But though I cannot be glad that he is in confidential relations with Lord Beaconsfield, I feel with you that no condemnation of the act could properly be pronounced, and also that after he had done it, he was more than ever bound to attend the Reform Club dinner.’

Was that an agreeable letter? It was *not* an agreeable letter. Mr. Gladstone, without question, had been displeased. Thus when in March, 1880, the Conservatives were swept from office he did not include Lord Dufferin’s name among those whom he rewarded. It had generally been assumed by Lord Dufferin’s friends that he would be offered either Ireland or India ; yet the former went to Lord Cowper and the latter to Lord Ripon ; the ‘first-class man’ remained in the post that he had been given by Lord Beaconsfield. He did not hide his mortification. ‘I should have thought,’ he wrote, ‘that my seven years in Canada, and the additional year I have spent here in keeping the peace between our Foreign Office and the Emperor, might have deserved a better reward than a further term of exile in an Arctic climate.’

(2)

His Russian mission was thus inauspicious from the outset and it remained inauspicious throughout. They

reached St. Petersburg in the first week of March, 1879, at a season when that flamboyant but untidy capital looks at its worst. The frosts of winter have by then cracked and blotched the agreeable facades of the public buildings: the rich red stucco of the Winter Palace, the delicate white and yellow stucco of the Admiralty, have by then fallen off in large flakes, giving a bubonic appearance to those superb or graceful buildings; the snow of the streets has been so mingled with horse-droppings as to assume the colour and texture of powdered ginger; the ice on the Neva has the appearance of a gigantic grey scab: and all that can be called daylight is a faint lightening of the encircling gloom between the hours of 10.30 in the morning and 2.30 in the afternoon. Under this cope of lead the acrid smell of Russia (which he had first noticed sixteen years before in the fort of Bomarsund) permeates every corner of that paludian city, bringing with it a whiff of Tartary; a breath of China; the neurosis of mystery; the disquiet of oppression, cruelty, incompetence, delation and fear.

Their immediate circumstances were not such as to lift this veil of depression. They were disappointed to observe, on driving from the station, that the sleighs in Russia bumped sullenly along those huge ungainly prospects, unenlivened by the carillons and feathers of Ottawa or Montreal. The vast Embassy Palace on the quay was both pretentious and uncomfortable. The reception rooms on the top floor creaked with parquet or tinkled with chandeliers; the brass orifices let into their silken walls exhaled the dry breath of the furnace below; the dining-room

looked out upon the courtyard and was airless and sad; the sill between the double windows of Lady Dufferin's boudoir was muffled by a strip of discoloured cotton wool; one looked out, across to the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul with its vast prison-casements, or down upon the shambling crowds on the Troitzky Most. The Office of Works had not as yet sent the crimson silk sofas which had been ordered in London; there was a whole regiment of little cane-seated chairs of gold; and the bedrooms on the mezzanine floor opened one into the other without the possibility of independent ingress or even of refined egress. Nor did the Secretaries possess that disciplined sense of servitude, that constant social availability which the Dufferins had learnt to expect from their Aides-de-Camp in Canada; they seemed, indeed, to prefer politics to tea parties, and to imagine that their functions began and actually ended in the Chancery. For once, the famous Sheridan optimism suffered an eclipse. Lord Dufferin began to wish quite ardently that he had never abandoned England and Mr. Gladstone. 'I did not come here,' he wrote to the Duke of Argyll, 'with a very light heart. Another spell of an Arctic climate is not a pleasant prospect. But the offer of the post was a great compliment . . . moreover I hate being idle.'

Even diplomatically his duties were not propitious. At his first audience with the Emperor Alexander II he was 'scolded' for the iniquities of Lord Beaconsfield's policy. Prince Gortchakoff was more agreeable. He assured Lord Dufferin that Russia had no designs in Central Asia. Even when, in July of 1879, it was evident that a large expedition was being assembled

against the 'Tekke Turcomans, the Prince was insistent that nothing more than punitive measures were contemplated and that there was no intention of any permanent annexations in Transcaspia ; still less was there any prospect of seizing the oasis of Merv. It is possible that Prince Gortchakoff was sincere in these assurances ; but events and public opinion were against him. Skobelev and his army in Transcaspia were determined to achieve some striking victory and to compensate Russia for her losses at Berlin. Fate, and the provocation of the Turcomans, played into his hands. In October the British occupied Kabul, thereby depriving Lord Dufferin of the moral basis of his arguments and arousing Russian feeling to a temperature which neither his own tact nor the skill of Gortchakoff were able to assuage. In December the Turcomans were so unwise as to inflict a defeat upon the Russian armies at Geoktepe. From that moment the cards passed into Skobelev's hands ; he played them with his usual ruthlessness. He imposed upon the Tsar and his government that policy of ' spontaneous infiltration ' which culminated in 1884 in the occupation of the Merv oasis. It was some slight, although belated, satisfaction to Lord Dufferin to reflect that, however much he may have failed in St. Petersburg, yet it was he who, in 1885, put a final stop to the policy of infiltration. In his red study, in his red palace, under those grey skies, he devoted his energies to soothing our own Foreign Office, who at the time were passing through one of their rare moods of patriotic aggressiveness. He kept the peace.

These diplomatic disappointments were not rendered more palatable by the internal conditions of Russia or

by the Nihilist menace which during those two years assumed an epidemic form. Lord Dufferin, although a Whig, cannot have been impervious to those feelings of saddened despair which afflict a sensitive Liberal when he examines Russian conditions either of 1880 or of 1937. The Nihilist menace was even more disturbing. It was indeed a strange phenomenon ; arising and dying out in the space of a few years ; and almost entirely confined to students of the Technical College, and especially to those of the faculty of Bio-Chemistry and Midwifery. It had first been noticed and christened by Turgueniev in *Fathers and Children* of 1862, and had since established itself by frequent assassinations and by the police repressions which thereafter ensued. In April, 1879, a Nihilist student of the name of Soloviev shot at the Emperor when he was strolling quite amicably outside the Winter Palace. In February, 1880, a mine was exploded in the basement two storeys below the room in which the Imperial family were expected to dine. Ten people were killed and thirty-four wounded, but the Tsar escaped owing to the fortunate chance that the Prince of Bulgaria (who had also been shot at while driving from his hotel) was late for dinner. Alexander II was perturbed by this incident and decided to try the experiment of killing Nihilism by kindness. He entrusted to Count Loris Melikoff the task of drawing up a wide programme of reforms, and on the morning of March 13, 1881, he approved a rescript appointing a committee to give to this programme an administrative shape.

Having signed this important ukaz he drove out to attend a military parade. Lord Dufferin was present

at this function, and had a conversation with the Emperor. 'He was,' he recorded afterwards, 'in very good spirits and spoke to me a little longer than usual, talking about the Duchess of Edinburgh.' From the drill hall in which the parade was held the Emperor went to the Palace of the Grand Duchess Catherine. From there he drove back to the Winter Palace, accompanied by his usual escort of ten Cossacks and by a police officer in a single open sleigh. On turning into the Champ de Mars a bomb was thrown under the brougham, killing two of his escort. The Emperor was much shaken by the explosion and received a slight cut on the face. The coachman assured him that the brougham had not been badly damaged and that he could be driven back to the palace. He insisted on getting out of the carriage in order to attend to those of his escort who had been wounded. He was seen to cross himself and to lean on the arm of one of his escort. He asked the man to lend him a handkerchief, but the Cossack replied that his own was too dirty. 'Never mind,' said the Emperor. It was at that moment that the second bomb was thrown. The Tsar's legs were shattered and he received wounds in the lower part of the body. They placed him on the police officer's sleigh and drove back rapidly to the Winter Palace.

Lord Dufferin had taken off his uniform and was sitting in his study reading the newspaper. He heard a 'violent report like a cannon' and immediately supposed that some Nihilist outrage had been attempted. A few minutes later (for the Embassy was close to the scene of the assassination) they came to tell him that the Emperor had been wounded by a

bomb. He drove at once to the Palace, arriving at the same moment as the doctor and the priest. The Grand Duke Vladimir came out of the private apartments (that bedroom as ungainly and encumbered as the room of a Rugby house-master) to tell him that the Emperor was dying. He returned and telegraphed the news to the Queen and Government. One of his last acts in Russia was to assist the Prince of Wales (for whose safety Queen Victoria had held him 'personally responsible') in investing the new Tsar, Alexander III, with the Order of the Garter.

(3)

There was one advantage about this Russian appointment; in Canada he had been obliged to remain in exile; from Russia he was able to make frequent, if exhausting, visits to England. He would cross to Clondeboyne and survey his plantations; he would spend long week-ends at Windsor (on one of which visits Count Schouvaloff astonished them all by driving back to London in a postchaise instead of in the, by then, quite customary train); and he would spend hours with his Liberal colleagues discussing the Irish policy of their leader. His early irritation with Mr. Gladstone's views upon the condition of Ireland returned to him with increased intensity. As the years progressed his loyalty to Irish union came to exceed his loyalty to the programme of the Liberal Party. He was prepared, if need be, to sacrifice his estates; but he was never prepared to accept Home Rule, which he regarded (in so far, at least, as Ulster was concerned) as 'a physical impossibility'.

Meanwhile this constant journeying between Russia



and England brought him one experience which he valued. It brought him the friendship of Prince Bismarck. No two men can have been so different or so alike. Moritz Busch in his memoirs records how one afternoon in February, 1879, he was surprised to observe the Chancellor conducting 'a slight, thin, elderly gentleman' to the *outer* door of the anteroom. These visits were repeated on every occasion (and they were frequent during those two years) on which Lord Dufferin passed through Berlin. We find him dining with Bismarck in July and being pressed by the Princess to use the Chancellor's Palace as an hotel. In the following December he was invited to Varzin :

'I found His Highness dining by himself in his dressing-gown, having just recovered from what has evidently been a pretty sharp bilious attack, which had occasioned him a great deal of suffering. The pain had been so great, he said, he had been ready to climb up the four walls of his room. I was then hurried off to my dinner in another room with his son. I was not allowed to wash my hands or to go to my room. The dinner was very good in a rough kind of way, with plenty of wine. After dinner he sent for me again and I spent more than two hours tête-à-tête with him. I also saw him the next morning and had every reason to be satisfied both with the cordial reception he gave me and the extreme frankness with which he spoke to me. . . . Varzin is a rambling unpretending house of no style, but with one huge wing added to it by the Chancellor himself. The estate, which he bought some twelve years ago, is about fifteen or twenty thousand acres. What induced him to pitch his tent in such a God-forsaken district of Pomerania I cannot conceive. It possesses a Russian climate, and is destitute of any picturesque features to relieve its barren expanses and monotonous pine forests, but its owner is

evidently very proud of his possessions, and is perpetually planting trees and taking his guests to see them grow.'

Prince Bismarck, at the time, was suffering, not only from a bilious attack, but also from an acute access of his perpetual obsession ; namely his nightmare of some agreement or understanding between France, Russia and England. He was only too glad to see France indulging in African adventures and Russia embarking upon ' spontaneous infiltration ' in Transcaspia. Such diversions would distract the attention of Paris and St. Petersburg from their German frontiers and would have the additional advantage of embroiling them with London. In a mood of convalescent frankness he expatiated to Lord Dufferin upon the anxieties with which he was assailed.

Germany, he asserted, had obtained all possible desires ; she now belonged to the party of '*les satisfaits*'. England also (while she might enjoy a ' sporting ' war here or there) was essentially in need of peace in Europe. The great danger was France, who was ever meditating revenge for her defeat of 1870. By herself, France would never be dangerous. Yet, were she to join with Russia, a most menacing situation might arise. It was to prevent this that he himself had made his Treaty with Austria, but he was determined to reinsure himself by establishing close relations with the Russian Court and of course with England. He trusted that Her Majesty's Government would realise the French danger and not drive France into the arms of Russia. He doubted whether (however friendly might be the relations between England and Germany) the former would, if it came to the point,

defend her against a coalition of France, Russia and possibly Austria. All he asked was that we should not quarrel unnecessarily with our French neighbours. So long as Great Britain remained on good terms with France, then the latter would be unlikely to flirt with Russia. But should we 'shake her off like a woman of doubtful virtue' then a Franco-Russian alliance (with all its terrible menace to the peace of Europe) would become a certainty.

This new version of the balance of power made a profound and lasting impression upon Lord Dufferin. It is perhaps unfortunate that it did not make an equal impression upon Bismarck's successors. Lord Dufferin, on his return, repeated what Bismarck had said to his friends in the Cabinet. They found the Chancellor's theories 'most interesting' and thereafter ignored them. But Lord Dufferin never forgot the great man of Varzin, the 'humorous and epigrammatic' manner in which he had expounded his theories, or the strange contrast between that colossus in a dressing gown and that thin little schoolboy voice.

(4)

'Miss Plimsoll,' I asked, 'is Uncle Dufferin a *great* man?'

I do not believe that I asked that question with any desire for information or even with much understanding of what it meant. We were having tea at the time; and Miss Plimsoll was sitting, a trifle triumphantly, at the head of the school-room table holding a brown tea-pot. It was the hour of the day when children are uneasy. The endless adventure of the morning; the excitements of luncheon; the enjoy-

ments of the afternoon; have all receded into a distant past. In front of one lies bread and butter, a slice of seed-cake, the ordeal of being cleansed, that transitory hour in the library, and the sense that the elms are throwing their shadows farther and farther across the lawn, that the rooks before long will caw and tumble in their final escapade, and that the moment is not far distant when the footmen will close the shutters in the library (that sound of loose iron fitting on mobile wood), and when one by one through that large house the gas-jets will pop along the corridors and the bedroom candlesticks will be laid out upon the table in the gallery which at happier hours contained only a carved brown box marked 'Letters', and a balance for weighing envelopes into the base of which fitted a pile of little brass weights ascending one above the other like the nine tiers of the circular temple erected by Nezahualcoyotl, King of Tezcuco.

In my own case this tea-time depression was exacerbated by the way Miss Plimsoll would behave at tea. She adopted towards this meal a primly proprietary air, as if it were some occult mystery which only the initiated could administer. In summoning us to other ceremonies she would assume her boatswain's voice, calling 'Break—fast' or 'La—unch' quite naturally, as one might say: 'Splice the mizzen brace!' Her tea-time call was charged with a different intonation; there was nothing about it of the brisk and busy comradeship of other invocations; it was a mixture of the peremptory, the yearning and the ecstatic; it was a most remarkable mixture, and never to this day can I hear a muezzin ululating

from his minaret without being reminded of that tea-time call at Clandeboye. Nor was it her summons only which was irritating. Once she was seated in front of the cups, the saucers, the cakes, the bread, and the brown tea-pot, a look of self-complacent hierophancy would soften, and withal harden, her face. She would, with exuberant gentility, hand us our own cups, our own slices of bread and butter, our own ration of greengage jam. And then she would address herself to the meal (the expression, which is not my own, is strictly applicable). She would attack it with voracious delicacy. She would spread the butter upon her bread in little happy dabs ; she would smear the whole surface with jam ; and she would then proceed to the most maddening trick of all. She would cut the bread into neat little squares and pop them one by one into her bird-like mouth. This natty method grated much upon my nerves. I knew that it would be succeeded by some equally gluttonous gentility in regard to the seed-cake. I would therefore think of some question—any question—which might create a diversion.

‘Miss Plimsoll,’ I asked, ‘is Uncle Dufferin a *great* man?’

My other governesses, I now feel, would have answered that question in a sensible manner. Miss Woods would have said ‘What do you mean by “great”?’—thereby avoiding the issue. Miss Corrin would have said (since she was the frankest of women) ‘I don’t know’. Miss Plimsoll displayed none of this uncertainty. She put down the tea-pot. Slowly, but deferentially, she laid it upon the china square which prevented it from marking the table-

cloth. She then raised her eyes and fixed them on the picture above the mantelpiece; it was a composite photograph of Lord Dufferin with his friends and relations curling in the vicinity of Montreal. Miss Plimsoll gazed at this picture enraptured, while she thought out (and wished us to observe that she was thinking out) exactly the right form of words. She then turned and faced me, still enraptured. 'He is,' she answered slowly; 'the greatest man in the world.'

I was pleased by this at the time, since, after all, he was my uncle and I was having tea in his house. For many years I took Miss Plimsoll's remark as a final answer to my perhaps otiose question. Even as I became older, I took it for granted that he had in fact been one of the leaders of the Victorian age. And then, one day at Balliol, Sligger Urquhart said to me: 'Was Lord Dufferin a *great* man? I have never been sure. I saw him once when he came here to unveil a bust at the Indian Institute. It was just before he died. He was certainly most agreeable. . . .'

I think I know now what I feel about this question. He was certainly one of the kindest men that ever lived. He possessed immense gifts and tremendous charm of personality. In the final crisis of his life he showed integrity and moral courage. But did he possess vision as well as imagination; was he a great statesman or only a great diplomatist? He was certainly a very great diplomatist.

(5)

Early in 1881 Lord Dufferin was transferred from St. Petersburg to Constantinople. He reached the Golden Horn in the last week of June and went

straight to the summer Embassy at Therapia. A few days later, with befitting ceremony, he presented his letters of credence to Abdul Hamid, whom he described as 'a small man with a dark beard, soft eyes, and a gentle manner'. His early negotiations with that tortuous autocrat were not successful. He intervened to save Midhat Pasha from execution, but only succeeded in postponing the assassination of that reformer by a few months. He failed entirely to induce Abdul Hamid to implement the promised reforms in Armenia, since the other Powers had expressed themselves as disinterested in that question. His main achievement as a diplomatist will always remain his handling of the Egyptian question. And to this day it is uncertain whether in that affair he behaved with extraordinary astuteness or was favoured by fortune and the stupidity of his antagonists.

The problem which he had to solve can be stated in summary form. With the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, Egypt had ceased to be a vague dependency of the Ottoman Empire and had become an area of great strategic, financial and political importance. The reckless extravagance of the Khedive Ismail had induced the French and British Governments to intervene in the interests of the bond-holders and to impose jointly a system of international control. In September, 1881, Arabi Pasha headed a nationalist revolt, having as its avowed object the exclusion of all foreign influence from Egypt. The Concert of Europe were agreed that Arabi should be suppressed. The problem was to decide by what Power, or by what group of Powers, such suppression should be carried out.

The British Government, who did not at first desire to be entangled in the Egyptian question, felt that it was the duty of the Sultan, as Suzerain, to re-establish order. The French Government, who were unwilling to see Abdul Hamid reaffirm his rights in North Africa, were in favour of joint Franco-British intervention. The Sultan hesitated between his ambition to assert his suzerain powers over Egypt and a superstitious fear lest Arabi might after all be the Messiah of Islam. And the remaining members of the Concert of Europe insisted that they should be consulted regarding any ultimate settlement. There were thus four candidates for the task of intervention, namely the French Government, the Concert of Europe, the Sultan and the British Government. By what methods did Lord Dufferin secure that in the end it was Great Britain who intervened single-handed and who seized Egypt for herself?

The first of the candidates to be eliminated was France. On January 8, 1882, the Government of M. Gambetta persuaded an unwilling British Government to subscribe to a Joint Note which committed them to Anglo-French intervention. The French and British fleets were thereupon sent to Alexandria, but in the meantime M. Gambetta fell from power. His successor, M. de Freycinet, was opposed to any adventure in Egypt, withdrew the French ships from the joint squadron at Alexandria, and assured the Chamber that in no circumstances would France be committed to intervention. The British fleet remained.

The Concert of Europe, as represented by a Conference of Ambassadors at Constantinople, decided, after many weeks of discussion, to invite the Sultan



to send Turkish troops to Egypt. Four days, however, before this Note was delivered, Arabi Pasha had adopted threatening measures at Alexandria and the British ships had bombarded the town. The Conference of Ambassadors, and with it the Concert of Europe, thereupon withdrew into the background.

There remained the Sultan. The British Government, realising that forcible intervention was now inevitable, wished this intervention to assume an Anglo-Turkish character. A British force, under Sir Garnet Wolseley, was despatched to Alexandria, and Lord Dufferin was instructed to urge the Sultan to co-operate with this force by sending a Turkish army to Egypt. At the same time he was to obtain from Abdul Hamid two preliminary documents. The first was a proclamation repudiating Arabi; the second was a Military Convention under which the conditions, scope and duration of the Anglo-Turkish occupation of Egypt would be defined. These documents were considered necessary since there was a danger that the Sultan, having once entered Egypt, might either join with Arabi or refuse to leave once order had been restored.

Throughout August of 1882 these negotiations continued. Day after day would Lord Dufferin steam up to Yildiz in his launch and endeavour to induce Abdul Hamid to sign these two documents. Sir Garnet Wolseley meantime was disembarking at Alexandria and the Turkish Expeditionary Force was assembled in Crete awaiting final orders. At one moment the Sultan would agree to sign the Proclamation but not the Convention, the next day he would accept the Convention and reject the Proclamation.

It was not till September 15 that the two documents had been agreed to in their final form. At 3 p.m. on the afternoon of that day Lord Dufferin again visited Yildiz hoping to conclude his negotiations and to sign the documents. The Sultan was still hesitant; for eleven long hours did Lord Dufferin remain at the palace while the Sultan kept on interrupting their discussion in order to consult his astrologer. The latter, who was suspected of being in Arabi's pay, urged his master not to sign the Proclamation. At 2 a.m. Lord Dufferin refused to wait any longer and returned to Therapia. He was met on arrival by a secretary who handed him a telegram. That telegram announced that at dawn that day Sir Garnet Wolseley had completely defeated Arabi at Tel-el-Kebir.

On the following morning the Sultan's ministers appeared at the Embassy to inform Lord Dufferin that His Majesty had at last decided to sign the documents. Lord Dufferin informed them that it was now too late. 'Your hesitation of yesterday,' he said, 'has made my reputation as a diplomatist, but ruined it as an honest man.'

There are many historians who contend to this day that the British Government always meant to intervene single-handed in Egypt and that with consummate skill they managed to play upon the hesitations of France, the Concert of Europe and Abdul Hamid until a decision had been obtained at Tel-el-Kebir. Such critics argue that the two documents, the Proclamation and the Convention, were so drafted and conceived as to spin out the negotiations until Sir Garnet Wolseley was ready to impose a decision by force. And they assert that during those weeks of August

and September Lord Dufferin would go off sailing in the *Marmora*, thus sundering himself from all communication with Yildiz at a vital stage of the discussions.

I question these criticisms both in principle and in fact. In principle, because it is not characteristic of any British Government to think out so ingenious a stratagem in advance; in fact, because my father, who assisted Lord Dufferin in all these negotiations, was positive, first that he considered the two documents essential, and secondly that he used his utmost efforts to obtain the Sultan's signature. Yet there are few foreign historians who would fail to describe these dilatory negotiations as a masterpiece of astute diplomacy.

Having in this manner secured Egypt for Great Britain, Lord Dufferin was sent to Cairo as High Commissioner with instructions to prepare a scheme for the future governance of the country. It was not an easy task. On the one hand he was expected to draft a constitution based upon the very noblest Liberal principles. On the other hand, he was expected so to strengthen the hands of the Khedive as to enable the British Government, within as short a period as possible, to withdraw their army of occupation. These two aims were in fact incompatible.

The Dufferin Report was published as a State Paper in September, 1883. There were some who criticised the ornate style in which it was composed, and Lord Dufferin had in fact referred to the Egyptian fellah as remaining, 'like his own Memnon, not irresponsive to the beams of the new dawn'. There are others,

and notably Lord Milner, who have criticised it for paying too much attention to 'the misleading catch-words, the impractical ideals which he felt bound to treat with respect'. There are others again who contend that Lord Dufferin must have been aware that his Constitution would only be practicable if supervised by a forceful British Agent in Cairo backed by a powerful British Army; and who blame him for having worded his report in such a manner as to render it an elegant essay in Liberal principles rather than a frank statement of the needs and difficulties of the Egyptian problem.

Such criticisms ignore the fact that the Dufferin Report is one of the most trenchant state papers ever composed. He established two principles of the greatest importance. First, that Egypt could never be ruled from Downing Street, and secondly, that any representative system must be based upon the village commune. The chapters which deal with the organisation of the Courts of Justice, the Army, the system of Land Assessment and the financial and fiscal provisions are eminently practical. And the fact remains that the system he advocated endured, and without any major disturbance, for a period of thirty years. It may or may not be true that at Constantinople Lord Dufferin proved himself the most astute of all imperial diplomatists; but it can scarcely be questioned that the Dufferin Report proves its author to have been a man of real constructive ability and rare vision.

## IX

### INDIA

The Museum at Clandeboye—Miss Plimsoll and the Indian Mutiny—Mr. Kipling's version of Lord Dufferin's achievements as Viceroy—His internal policy—The Afghan question—Visit of the Amir to Rawal Pindi—The Panjdeh crisis—France and Burmah—Lord Dufferin declares war on King Theebaw—Occupation of Mandalay—His visit to Burmah—Lady Dufferin on Queen Soopaya-Lât—The pomp of power—The loneliness of Viceregal life—Lord Dufferin asks to be appointed to Rome—Created a Marquis—The Countess of Dufferin Fund.

#### (I)

THE stairway which at Clandeboye led to the gallery from the inner hall, did not (as I have already explained) begin climbing to the upper levels until it had passed a door on the right. That door was the door of the Museum; it was the most alarming door in the whole house. Beyond it lurked three objects of diverse horror.

The first was the mummified hand of some Egyptian, which from a bandage of stained cerecloth, extended a withered digit, complete with finger-nail. This hand, I felt, was the medium through which was exercised the malignity of all those other Egyptians who, in granite, in limestone, in diorite, or in alabaster, haunted that otherwise happy house. There were the black granite legs of Thotmes II, the bronze figure of Isis with the infant Horus in her arms, the blue head of Hathor, the grey figure of Sekhmet, the more amicable but no less homesick effigy of Amen-

Hetep II. These idols, I well knew, were enraged with Uncle Dufferin for having dragged them from their tombs. So marked, in fact, was their resentment, that they were quite (and indeed fully) prepared to visit it upon the innocent and the guilty alike. They were not in the very least above using that withered claw wherewith to persecute, to pursue, to prod, and even to pinch, a little boy who (although averse from every form of Egyptology) was indisputably the nephew, if only by marriage, of the man who had dragged them from Thebes to County Down.

The second object was alarming only because of the associations which it evoked. It was an exact model of the Black Hole of Calcutta, made in wood and painted a slate-grey colour. One could lift off the roof of the Black Hole itself and gaze down into the little closet in which Suraj-ed-Douleh had confined the British prisoners whom he had captured at Fort William. Miss Plimsoll adored that model; she would gloat over it with morbid ecstasy. I suspect that, in her careless rapture, she had confused the Black Hole with the Indian Mutiny; an episode in our history which she loved dearly—more dearly even than the murder of the little princes in the Tower; more dearly even than Balaklava and the Lady with the Lamp. Never—so she would assure me—had there been such an exhibition of British pluck. She would describe in vivid detail how these unfortunate men and women, one hundred and forty-six in number, were incarcerated in this tiny jail and how only those who had managed nobly and heroically to fight their way to the two little windows were able to survive the agony of that June night. Even in those days I

felt that Miss Plimsoll might have chosen some more telling example of British heroism since, after all, there was nothing else that these wretched people could well have done. Miss Plimsoll could never abide such questionings. She would adopt her hierophantic pose, 'And then,' she would say—raising her pince-nez to the skylight, 'and then, there was the *Well of Cawnpore*.' She enunciated the last three words in the tone of voice which she usually reserved for poetry. I knew that voice: it meant, for me, brave Kempenfelt (a native of Sweden) and the hero of Corunna. It meant the schooner *Hesperus* and 'You know we French stormed Ratisbon'. Yet the terror of the Black Hole would return to me at night time, when I would lie awake quaking with claustrophobia.

The third object, in its way, was the most alarming of the three. It was a water-colour representing a young man of faun-like appearance closely accompanied by a girl of great beauty. They crouched naked together in a cornfield as he raised a goblet of wine to her lips. Upon his face was an expression which I should now take to be one of urgent sexual desire. Upon her face was a look of shocked expectancy. Their faces were very close together and between them, and around them, the golden heads of the wheat protruded and intruded as if at a harvest festival. 'What a very *curious* picture!' Lady Maud Rolleston remarked, when she was being conducted over the Museum by my uncle. 'Yes,' he lisped, raising his eye-glass, 'it was done by a young Italian. He went mad, poor boy, and cut that lady's little throat from ear to ear. He died in an asylum. I bought the picture in Rome.' I was not, of course, supposed to overhear that

remark. I wish indeed that I had never heard it. For at night time, when the great house slept, the boards upon the little staircase would creak suddenly, one by one, and the young man with his razor, his wild eyes and his red questing lips, the mummy's claw, Sekhmet, and even my friend the Kwakewlth totem, would start prowling with wide but silent steps along the corridors, searching for little boys who (without a sound) could be squeezed and squashed into the Black Hole; and then the lid could be put on; and the young man with the razor would put one questing eye against the bars of the window. . . .

‘Miss Plimsoll!!! . . . Miss Plimsoll!!!’

Apart from these distressing objects, the Museum was an interesting little room. In the centre was a huge model of the Palace of Mandalay complete with its outside walls and zarebas even down to the little sentry boxes at the bridge and the bells which tinkled upon the points of the eaves. One could tinkle them with that otiose movement of the index which in elderly persons is used during conversation to flick the ash off a cigar. Then there was a model of a temple at Rangoon executed in ivory (or it may have been white pith) with a wealth of palm trees. In cupboards along the wall were many dresses of various origins, including the state robes of King Theebaw, which were almost entirely composed of golden sequins. There was a collection of fans, powder-flasks, and trumpets, much Egyptian pottery, a wasp's nest of gigantic size, part of one of the ships of the Spanish Armada which had been found in a bog, a few bones of sorts, many coins, some Turkish pipe stems, a set of mocassins (children size) some enamelled



easter-eggs of the pre-Fabergé period, and a small bust of d'Azeglio.

When I became a man, I revisited that Museum after an absence from Clandeboye of more than twenty years. As I laid my hand upon the door, some wraith of my former disquiet swirled around me. I entered and was greeted by the smell of damp Irish plaster mingling with all the savours of the East. My eyes turned to the right, searching for the picture of the lady in the cornfield. It had been removed, and in its place hung a brightly coloured portrait of the Maharajah Holkar. The mummied hand was also missing, having, I earnestly trust, been given decent burial. But there—untouched, unchanged—stood the model of the Black Hole of Calcutta. I raised the lid of the little jail-room and gazed inside; the memory of Edith Plimsoll came back to me and the flash of her pince-nez under the skylight. I smiled affectionately at this memory; but whether to her, or to myself, I am not certain.

I then surveyed the room which for so many years had occupied a definite chamber in my memory. I paused in surprise. I had conceived it as being as heterogeneous as any junk-shop; I now saw that it was predominantly Indian. Upon the walls were hung dynasty after dynasty of Rajahs and Maharajahs, arrayed in emeralds and pearls. The whole of one side was filled by a collection of small figures representing Indian types: the Punjabi in his *kullah*, the Brahman in his *dhoti*, the untouchables in almost nothing at all. And down the other wall ran a series of showcases, containing many artistic trowels inscribed in a mood of extreme adulation, and no less

than fifty-five address boxes in gold, in silver, in ivory, in enamel, in ebony, in sandal-wood, in filigree, or in teak.

What had made me forget these dolls and caskets? Was it that in my uncle's lifetime they had been considered too topical and too sacred for public display and had been kept, with the spurs and the roses, in the strong-room amid tissue paper and green baize? Or had they been there all the time and merely escaped my attention? If so, how came it that I, who took so personal an interest in the Vancouver totems, the curling stones, the Egyptian antiquities and even the little brushes from the altar of St. Peter's, should have withheld all affection from this glittering panoply of England's rule? Was it due to that curious selectiveness of a child's memory which rejects from consciousness any object which does not awake either immediate pleasure or immediate pain? Or is Dr. Freud right after all, and had I repressed these glittering gauds because of their all too painful association with the Black Hole of Calcutta, Miss Plimsoll, and the Well of Cawnpore? Or was it (as the Viennese might further contend) some Siva-complex, some dread of the destruction-principle, which caused my infant consciousness to hide these trowels from my memory, blanketing them under layer upon layer of the unconscious? It was nothing of the sort. I have suffered in my life from no repressions. Either the things had been there in my time; or else they had not. If, in fact, they had been hidden in the plate-room, then my forgetfulness is excusable. If they were kept in the Museum, then their ugliness, and their blatant lack of human interest had caused me to pass them by. India

had not, at that date, fired my imagination. I regarded it, in spite of Dr. Freud, as on the dull side.

(2)

Was it really on the dull side? I have a suspicion that it was.

Mr. Rudyard Kipling, in a poem entitled 'One Viceroy resigns' has bequeathed to posterity an intimate picture of Lord Dufferin handing the reins of office to his successor, Lord Lansdowne. The retiring Viceroy and the Viceroy-elect are represented as dining alone together upon the night of Lord Lansdowne's arrival and upon the eve of Lord Dufferin's departure. They remain over their wine until the unusual hour of 2 a.m. Why alone? Why 2 a.m.? During this protracted séance, Lord Dufferin indulges in an uninterrupted monologue which, although highly characteristic of Mr. Kipling, does not accurately reflect the habits, manners or phraseology of the proconsul whom he was describing. The poem opens with consummate jauntiness :

' So here's your Empire. No more wine, then? Good.  
We'll clear the Aides and khitmutgars away . . . '

It continues with some sly allusions to various Members of Council who were known to Mr. Kipling by repute. And it contains an interesting estimate of Lord Dufferin's conception of his own Viceregal achievement :

' I'm old. I followed Power to the last,  
Gave her my best, and Power followed me.  
It's worth it—on my soul I'm speaking plain,  
Here by the claret glasses !—worth it all.

I gave—no matter what I gave—I win.  
I *know* I win. Mine's work, good work that lives !  
A country twice the size of France—the North  
Safeguarded. That's my record ; sink the rest  
And better if you can . . .  
A hundred thousand speeches, much red cloth,  
And Smiths thrice happy if I call them Jones,  
(I can't remember half their names) or reined  
My pony on the Mall to greet their wives.  
More trains, more troops, more dust, and then all's  
done.  
Four years, and I forget. If I forget,  
How will *they* bear me in their minds ? The North  
Safeguarded—nearly (Roberts knows the rest)  
A country twice the size of France annexed.  
That stays at least. The rest may pass—may pass . . .'

It will be clear from this soliloquy that Mr. Kipling considered Lord Dufferin's two main achievements during his tenure of office to have been (*a*) his handling of the Panjdeh crisis, and (*b*) his annexation of Burmah. Much as I dislike Mr. Kipling's treatment of his subject, I do not disagree with his conclusions. Lord Dufferin's main triumphs were certainly in the area of external rather than internal policy. It is an exaggeration to state, as Lord Curzon has stated, that he 'left no enduring mark on Indian administration'. It must be remembered that he was sent out primarily to repair the ravages caused by Lord Ripon's impulsive optimism and that in so far as internal affairs were concerned, his policy was intended to be one of 'conciliation and repose'. 'Lord Dufferin's administration,' wrote Lord Curzon, 'was in reality a monument to the saving grace of tact. No other man could so soon or so triumphantly have smoothed the ruffled

surface of Indian life.' Lord Ripon had outraged the deepest feelings of the European community while raising the expectations of the Indians to a pitch which at that time appeared almost feverish. Lord Dufferin succeeded in restoring good relations between the Government of India and its Civil Service, without overtly repudiating the Ripon system and without violating the principle of the continuity of viceregal policy. Nor were his own opinions in any sense reactionary.

The older officials for instance were apt to tell him that it was a mistake for any Viceroy to consider native opinion or to pay attention to the vernacular press. He was aware that the latter represented only a small class of educated Indians, but he contended that the importance of the educated would rapidly increase. 'Although,' he wrote, 'this class is at present small and uninfluential, it is both wise and right to count with it, and we must remember that it is above all things a growing power.' It was two years after his arrival in India that this power began to assume definite political shape. In the winter of 1886-1887 an Association of Reform met in Calcutta and conferred upon itself the title of 'The National Congress'. Lord Dufferin was not unsympathetic to this movement although he was fully aware of its possible implications. He urged the British Government 'to give quickly and with a good grace whatever it may be possible or desirable to accord'. He was fully alive to the fact that the more advanced members of the Congress party desired to retain the benefits of British protection while dispensing with the restrictions of British rule. He was not in the least perturbed by

such a realisation. 'Now,' he wrote, 'that we have educated these people, their desire to take a larger part in the management of their own domestic affairs seems to me a legitimate and reasonable aspiration, and I think there should be enough statesmanship amongst us to contrive the means of permitting them to do so without unduly compromising our imperial supremacy.'

Nor did he, in his internal policy, confine himself to Liberal incantations. His experience as an Irish landlord had given him a practical sympathy with tenants' rights together with great knowledge, and even greater distrust, of unsound agricultural legislation. Among the most progressive of the administrative reforms which he introduced were those which aimed at protecting the Indian peasant against those by whom he was exploited. By his Bengal Tenancy Bill of 1895 he struck a just balance between the rights of the rayah and the claims of the zemindar. His Oudh Rent Act of 1886 and his Punjab Land Tenures Bill of 1887 provided for increased security of tenure and compensation for improvements effected. The personal study which he gave to these legislative measures was intense and prolonged. It convinced those who worked under him that the Viceroy's much proclaimed brilliance had beneath it a hard-headed Ulster foundation. Lord Curzon (who possessed no psychological acumen whatsoever) was always unable to understand his predecessor's exquisite balance between the Scotch and Irish sides of his temperament. His summary of Lord Dufferin's methods of work is not accurate only, but also illuminating; yet it illuminates Lord Curzon even more than it illuminates Lord Dufferin :

‘In his conduct of affairs the Viceroy exhibited a curious mixture of application and indifference. He laboured hard to obtain a mastery of all essential features of the administration, and wrote or inspired long and eloquent Minutes and Despatches. He took a great deal of trouble about his public addresses, which in common with all his speeches were carefully elaborated. He devoted weary hours to the study of Persian, under the quite mistaken impression that it was the language of the educated classes and of the Indian Princes, with whom he hoped to be able to converse in their own tongue. But he was careless about detail, interfered very little in departmental business, and left the conduct of minor matters to his Private Secretary and the officials.’

How tragic that Lord Curzon should himself have been incapable of emulating so excellent an example !

(3)

Mr. Kipling, none the less, was correct when he maintained that the two most lasting memorials of Lord Dufferin’s rule were his settlement of the Afghan frontier and his annexation of Burmah. In dealing with the former he displayed his expected powers of personal persuasion and also a rapid pliancy of mind. The latter crisis enabled him to prove that this pliancy had the quality of a steel wand, and that, when a situation appeared to him to call for immediate action, he could assume vast personal responsibility and take rapid, rigid, and even ruthless decisions.

The Afghan question, known at the time as ‘the Panjdeh incident’, might, had it not been for Lord Dufferin, have landed us in a second Anglo-Russian war. I have already explained how the policy of ‘spontaneous infiltration’ which had so alarmed our

Foreign Office in 1881 had by 1884 brought the Russians to the Merv oasis. From there they pushed along the Oxus until their advanced posts had almost reached the Afghan frontier. They proceeded thereafter, in March of 1885, to occupy the district of Panjdeh which the Afghans claimed to be within their own territory. A critical situation was thereby created and the Government of India, fearing a Russian seizure of Herat, assembled an army for its defence.

The British Government were bound by treaty to guarantee the 'integrity and independence' of Afghanistan; if, therefore, the Afghans claimed that the Russian occupation of Panjdeh constituted a violation of that integrity, then we were bound in honour to turn the Russians out by force. And what made it particularly awkward was that, at the very height of the crisis, the Amir of Afghanistan arrived at Rawal Pindi on a state visit to the Viceroy.

It seemed as if the elements had conspired to render that visit among the most disastrous of all known durbars. For three days before the Amir's arrival the rain descended without ceasing upon Rawal Pindi. The most elaborate preparations had been made :

'The Viceroy's Camp,' records Lady Dufferin, 'consists of thirty-six tents for staff and for guests, and these form a street, eighteen on each side, with a broad strip of grass in front of them, and two wide roads with another wide stretch of grass down the centre, the length of which is broken with fountains and rockeries and ferneries. At the top of this double street is our tent palace. The first room in it is an enormous drawing-room, then comes a still bigger "durbars tent", and then—always under cover—you pass on to Her Ex-



cellency's boudoir. His Excellency's office, her bedroom, his room, with dressing-rooms and bathrooms; and then there is "the young ladies' boudoir" and their bedrooms, and a tent for Miss Blackwell, one for Mr. Nowell, one for Miss MacDonald, and one for His Excellency's bearer (or under-valet) and one for our ayahs (or under-maids) and my boudoir opens on to a square, full of pots of flowers, where a little fountain sprinkles a bed of maidenhair; and in all the rooms there are Persian carpets and sofas and arm-chairs; in the bedrooms pier glasses, chests of drawers and wardrobes. The "street" has lamp-posts all down it and water laid on; there are telephones and a post office, messengers on camels, and six extra aides-de-camp in waiting on us—and that is the way we are "roughing it" in camp! In addition to this you must imagine the kitchen department and our band and our number of servants and our guards! I believe we have rows and rows of body-guard and policemen and Seaforth Highlanders keeping watch over us here.'

Upon all this, upon the sofas and the Persian carpets, upon the ferneries and the maidenhair, the rain poured relentlessly. The great Shamiana or Durbar Tent collapsed; the fifty elephants were sent home; the Amir made his entry in a closed brougham; the ladies had to wrap themselves in shawls; the lawns turned into a morass; the review had to be abandoned; Lady Dufferin put on a waterproof when she visited the Duchess of Connaught; and Lady Downe had to be carried in the arms of native servants across to dinner.

The Amir was entranced. In the autobiography which he subsequently published he says little of the rain but describes Lady Dufferin as 'the cleverest woman I have ever seen'. He was given many

presents, including a sword of honour, a Mauser pistol and a mechanical bird in a gold cage; he was also invested with the Star of India. The Shamiana was repaired and the state banquet proved a great success. 'The Amir,' Lady Dufferin records, 'watched D. all through and did as he did, while his personal attendant, a boy of sixteen, who always goes about with him, stood behind his chair and smoked cigarettes.' And at the end of dinner, the Amir rose quite unexpectedly and made a speech in which he expressed his devoted friendship for Great Britain, the Viceroy, Lady Dufferin, and the Government of India.

It was at this inauspicious moment that news arrived that on March 30 the Russians had attacked the Afghan frontier posts at Panjdeh. The Viceroy, his Foreign Secretary, the Amir Abdur-Rahman and an interpreter remained closeted for some hours in a dripping but most carefully guarded tent. Lord Dufferin asked the Amir what were his 'proposals and opinions'. His Highness took a large handful of snuff, and answered that this was not a fair question. A long pause ensued during which Lord Dufferin scrutinised this burly autocrat, noting the flash of 'implacable severity' which from time to time would dart across his small but humorous eyes. His Excellency then suggested that, if His Highness were at all anxious regarding the fort of Herat, the Government of India might be willing to assist him by sending troops for its defence. The Amir answered that his people were 'ignorant, brutal and suspicious' and that they would resent such assistance. In fact no men, officers or officials should be sent from India.

Lord Dufferin was quick to seize this opening. 'If,' he said, 'your Highness rejects the assistance that we offer you under the terms of our Treaty, then your Highness will have to make with the Russians the best arrangement you can. You will be unable, for instance, to maintain your claim to the Panjdeh district.' The Amir, much to their surprise, then stated that he did not advance, and had never advanced, any such claim. With great rapidity Lord Dufferin nailed him to that renunciation. He at the same time assured His Highness that the flower of the Indian, nay of the British Army was at his disposal. The Amir again refused. The Russian occupation of Panjdeh was not, therefore, a violation of the Afghan frontier? The Amir indicated assent. There was therefore no Panjdeh crisis and the assistance guaranteed by our Treaty was not required? His Highness beamed approval. Lord Dufferin left the tent to telegraph the glad news to Downing Street. And thereafter an Anglo-Russian commission delimited the Afghan frontier, and the Russians ceased their infiltration into Central Asia and turned the stream of their expansion (most unfortunately for themselves) towards the Far East. The crisis passed.

(4)

Meanwhile the French Government, imagining that war between Great Britain and Russia was wholly inevitable, had profited by the occasion to extend their influence over Upper Burmah. In February, 1885, they sent a mission to Mandalay and concluded with King Theebaw a treaty of commerce and amity, under which, in effect, their protectorate over Indo-China

would be extended to the Indian frontier. Lord Dufferin acted with the greatest promptitude. King Theebaw was informed that he must at once receive a British Resident at Mandalay and that in future he must, in so far as the conduct of his foreign policy was concerned, accept the advice of the Government of India. A force of 10,000 men was at the same time concentrated at Rangoon. King Theebaw replied to this intimation by refusing to receive a British Resident and by issuing a most offensive proclamation. The news of this defiance reached the Viceroy on the very day that he was packing up to leave Simla for the plains. Lady Dufferin (who in general excluded politics from her diary) has the following entry for Tuesday, 20th October, 1885 :

‘We breakfasted at eight o’clock. At a quarter past the Viceroy signed the declaration of war with Burmah.’

The army at Rangoon had been admirably organised and equipped. The Burmese fled before its advance. ‘They cannot,’ Lady Dufferin commented, ‘stand fixed bayonets for a second.’ Within ten days General Prendergast had reached Mandalay and King Theebaw was taken prisoner. The whole of Burmah, ‘twice the size of France’, had been conquered within less than a fortnight. It remained to decide what to do with this large and sudden acquisition. Lord Dufferin annexed it.

He had sound reasons for this decision :

‘As to the relative advantages,’ he wrote, ‘of placing a protected Prince upon the throne, or of annexation pure and simple, I have no hesitation in saying that the latter is the best course. It is quite enough to be worried

by a buffer policy on the west without reduplicating it on the east. Moreover, elasticity and a certain power of intermediate resistance are the essential qualities which constitute a "buffer", and to a certain though limited extent they may be said to exist in Afghanistan, but Burmah is so soft and pulpy a substance that she could never be put to such a use.'

Before drawing up the necessary administrative system of Burmah he decided to visit this new province in person. Accompanied by Lord (at that time Sir Frederick) Roberts and a numerous retinue, he embarked at Calcutta on February 3, 1886, and steamed to Rangoon. The most elaborate preparations had been made for his reception :

'As we advance,' Lord Dufferin recorded, 'we gradually catch sight of the Great Pagoda at Rangoon—it is just like a big bell and is the only building to be seen from a distance—and then the men of war come in sight and the reception begins. The ships are dressed, the yards are manned, and great clouds of smoke and booming cannon announce the Viceroy's approach. The banks were a perfect mass of people, and there were gardens and palm trees, and very pretty Swiss-cottage sort of houses beyond them, and more crowds visible in the distance. Then on the wharf, which was laid with red cloth, were Infantry, Regulars, and Volunteers, and bishops, and ladies, and town councillors, all waiting. And behind them—what do you think? Why, the gateway of Killyleagh and the tower on the Town Rock, all in canvas, but exact representations of the solid stone. . . .'

From Rangoon they went by train to Prome, where they embarked upon the river steamer which was to take them up the Irrawaddy. Lady Dufferin's apart-

ments on this steamer had been beautifully decorated with scent bottles and plush chairs ; there was some difficulty, however, in finding accommodation for the hundred servants which formed part only of the vice-regal household. At noon on February 12 they reached Mandalay and drove in state to the Palace. They were housed in the golden rooms so recently evacuated by King Theebaw and Queen Soopaya-Lât.

On Sunday they attended Divine Service in King Theebaw's Hall of Audience. The Army Chaplain stood in front of the throne ; the soldiers were lined up between the columns. Everybody sang Anglican hymns of thanksgiving.

The evidence proved that Queen Soopaya-Lât (whom the British private soldier had christened 'Celia Sophia') had proved the evil genius of her husband, and half-brother, King Theebaw. She was an imperious, greedy, and most ignorant woman. From the French nuns settled in Mandalay, Lady Dufferin obtained many details regarding the private life of the Queen and her consort :

' They both lived in small back rooms, sitting all day side by side on the ground, and if he moved away she used to tell him to come back quickly. They seldom went about the Palace, and only appeared on state occasions in the large apartments. She was a very violent and passionate woman, governed entirely by impulse and caprice, thinking herself the very greatest person in all the world, and unable to conceive the possibility of misfortune or retribution falling upon her. She had maids of honour and eunuchs about her, and she had a wonderful talent for keeping them employed. Her followers were like ants, always busy, always fetching or carrying, or in some way fulfilling her behests. The

King had a guard of women who were relieved at stated hours like soldiers ; but Soopaya-Lât took good care of him, and if he looked at another woman, woe betide that unfortunate creature. That she employed "refined cruelty" and that she tortured her victims seems certain ; and the nuns told me that they have sat with her in one room while women were being beaten in the next, and that the Queen and her Court were highly amused by their cries, and treated it all as the most enjoyable fête.

'I can't make out that she had much amusement in the daytime. She was fond of music and if there were any European ladies at Mandalay she used to get them to come and play the piano to her, but they had to do so kneeling. A photographer used to be sent for sometimes, and he was kept photographing all the ladies of her Court the whole day long. Another day she would look through all her albums and study the very ugly photographs therein. I saw numbers of them, and bought one.

'When (after his surrender to us) King Theebaw left the Palace, his hands were crossed before him, and he had a wife on each side ; he thus led them out and seems to have behaved with considerable dignity. What a terribly dramatic ending to Soopaya's greatness ! Not even a gold coach to go away in ; only a square box of a vehicle, in which she and the King and her mother all crowded together. They were followed by women carrying trays full of goods, but many of these ran away and escaped with the things.'

King Theebaw and his Queen were by then living in sulky exile at Ratnigiri on the Bombay coast. The Dufferins, on leaving Mandalay, returned in slow state to Madras and Calcutta.

The pacification of Burmah was not (in spite of the admirable regulations which Lord Dufferin had promulgated) as rapid a performance as had been its

conquest. Bands of marauding dacoits infested the country and many British officers and soldiers were sniped. Lord Dufferin was criticised in the English press for having been over-impulsive. Sensitive, as he always was, to any public criticism, the reports of continued dacoity in the Burmese provinces caused him much distress. He appealed to Lord Roberts to prepare and supervise a scheme for the suppression of brigandage throughout the province; and by the spring of 1889 complete order had been established.

(5)

Such were the most durable of Lord Dufferin's achievements. The North safeguarded and the annexation of a country 'twice the size of France'. For the rest, he aimed only at maintaining peace and order. 'I never,' he wrote to Lord Salisbury in February, 1888, 'had any ambition to distinguish my reign by a sensational policy, believing as I did . . . that in the present condition of affairs it is best for the country that the administration should be driven at a slow and steady pressure.' Apart from these two most dramatic and most telling strokes of statesmanship, Lord Dufferin's four years in India were marked by no great administrative changes and by no political experiments. They fuse, as one looks back upon them, into a dusty succession of tours and durbars, of speeches and addresses, of banquets and receptions, of levees and investitures.

He was not a man to despise the pomps of power. He liked the great Palace at Calcutta which Captain Wyatt of the Royal Engineers had so cunningly copied from the Adam designs of Kedleston. He liked the



enormous stairway at the north entrance and the red carpet which would cascade so neatly between the double lines of bodyguard. He liked the Marble Hall with the statues of the twelve Cæsars ; and the Throne Room with its high canopy of pale green silk ; and the silver chair of State with its two lions and the imperial crown rising (a trifle pointedly) from a lotus flower ; and the Ball Room with its twenty-four chandeliers ; and the Council Chamber with its long portraits of Clive, Wellesley, Cornwallis and Hardinge. He liked the *chobdars* preceding him with their golden maces, he liked the *chowri* or yak's tail which was waved above him, and the great *morchals* or peacock feather fans. He enjoyed sitting in his robes of the Star of India, upon the throne of Tippu Sultan with these Moghul emblems grouped around him, and below him the massed Victorian uniforms of his staff. He enjoyed gazing down that long vista of marble columns, while the guns thundered outside, while the viceregal band played tunes from Aida and while a slow procession of Rajahs advanced in gold and pearls and emeralds to do him homage. His features on such occasions would be as impassive as those of Shah Jehan. He would lean forwards slowly and touch with his brown fingers the proffered nazar. The guns once again would thunder in salute.

It would be a mistake to suggest that Lord Dufferin was ever bored by India. He loved the sense of responsibility and beneficent power ; he enjoyed the endless receptions and the opportunities which they afforded of being kind to the most nervous civil servants or the most terrified ladies ; he enjoyed his domestic life, and the breakfasts on the verandah, and

those happy week-ends at Barrackpore. He would have his daily walk accompanied by a detective who could speak Persian and with whom he would converse in that agreeable language, listening to fairy tales of Sohrab and Rustum, to long ranting passages from Firdoosi, to neat little songs by Hafiz, or to the metaphysical intricacies of Djellaledin.

And yet, as the years passed, even this relaxation began to pall. 'It is,' he wrote, 'an odd thing to say, but dullness is certainly the characteristic of an Indian Viceroy's existence.' He longed to be able, if only for a moment, to mingle again with his fellow men and women on terms of natural equality and to hear again the cultured conversation, the sparkle and the gaiety, which he had loved in his youth. He was feeling old. His health was not what it had been. A slight deafness obscured his hearing. A great weariness assailed him and he longed for Europe. In 1887 he wrote to Lord Salisbury begging to be relieved of his high office before his term expired. In 1888 he repeated this request. 'I think,' he wrote, 'that I can come home with a clear conscience.' He gave as his reason his desire to see something of his children, who were now attaining adult age. His two elder daughters, also, had just come out. 'I had no right,' he explained afterwards, 'to sacrifice to my own ambition the interests of so many who were dependent upon me.' He longed, above all, for Clandeboye.

In September, 1888, he was created a Marquis. There was some difficulty as to the style which he should adopt. He wished to take the additional title of Quebec: 'for the town,' he explained, 'owes its preservation to me, as I saved its walls from destruc-

tion and rebuilt the gates. Moreover, so many of my happiest associations are connected with it ; and I also think it sounds well.' This title was not approved by Queen Victoria who suggested some Indian place-name, such as Delhi. Lord Dufferin replied that such a name would be resented in India, although some Burmese name would cause less inconvenient resentment. Those he first thought of, such as Chittagong, sounded, however, 'too like names out of one of Offenbach's operas or the Mikado'. Finally he selected the additional name of Ava, the old Burmese capital near Mandalay. But even then he dreaded lest he might be exposed to public criticism for having chosen so exotic and perhaps presumptuous a title ; he asked that when the announcement was made it might be intimated that he had called himself after this Burmese city by the Queen's command.

On December 10, 1888, he handed over his office to Lord Lansdowne and left India four days later.

Lady Dufferin, perhaps, had found viceregal life more congenial. True it was that she was in constant terror of the horses taking fright when the band played or the guns fired a salute. Yet, as so often occurs with shy women, she felt more at her ease as the central figure of some state function, when her actions and even her words were prescribed for her, than in the more competitive and less regulated atmosphere of London society. She well knew that her dignity and grace were unrivalled ; and her curtsy to the Viceroy (which was executed with the bust held rigid above a low and sweeping obeisance) was remembered for years throughout India. She enjoyed sight-seeing and actually liked visiting schools and distributing prizes.



HARIOT, LADY DUFFERIN  
*from a photograph taken in India*

She had a talent for domestic organisation, and after her first moment of dismay at the arcades and draughts of Government House, she was able, in one of the paws of that giant, to create her own set of private rooms according to taste. 'The furniture,' she wrote, 'is pink silk and I have made the room look homey with little tables, screens, plants and photographs.' She was delighted by Lord Wellesley's country seat at Barrackpore. 'It reminds me,' she wrote, 'of the Duke of Westminster's place at Cliveden, and we happened to have two of his sons with us who thought so too.' And indeed the week-ends which she spent at Barrackpore sitting under the great banyan tree were among the happiest of all her Indian experiences. Simla, it is true, was something of a shock. The original Governor's Lodge, called 'Peterhof', struck her as inadequate. 'The house itself,' she reported, 'is a cottage, and would be very suitable for any family desiring to lead a domestic and not an official life. . . . I have never lived in such a small house.' 'Peterhof' was therefore condemned; and during the Dufferins' tenure of office the present ghastly mansion was erected in its place.

Yet Lady Dufferin's talent for organisation, her commanding personality and her capacity for imposing obedience on other people were applied to more important and more lasting purposes. It was she who, in August, 1885, founded the 'National Association for supplying Female Medical Aid to the Women of India', which is still known as the 'Countess of Dufferin Fund'. Before she left India she had the satisfaction of knowing that her scheme had spread through every province and had been adopted in almost

every Native State. The incalculable benefits which the women of the Zenana owe to Lady Dufferin's sympathy, energy and force have never been better rendered than in the 'Song of the Women' in which Rudyard Kipling commemorated her achievements :

'How shall she know the worship that we do her?

The walls are high and she is very far.

How shall the women's message reach unto her

Above the tumult of the packed bazaar?

Free wind of March against the lattice blowing,

Bear thou our thanks lest she depart unknowing.

'Go forth across the fields we may not roam in,

Go forth beyond the trees that fringe the city,

To whatso'er fair place she hath her home in,

Who dowered us with wealth of love and pity.

Out of our shadow pass and seek her singing—

"I have no gifts but love alone for bringing."

'Say that we be a feeble folk who greet her,

But old in grief and very wise in tears ;

Say that we, being desolate, entreat her

That she forget us not in after years ;

For we have seen the light and it were grievous

To dim that dawning if our Lady leave us . . .

'If she hath sent her servants in our pain,

If she have fought with death and dulled his sword ;

If she hath given back our sick again,

And to the breast the weakling lips restored,

Is it a little thing that she have wrought ?

Then Life and Death and Motherhood be nought.'

In 1935 Lady Dufferin (then in her ninety-third year) attended at the India Office the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of her fund. The speech which

she delivered on that occasion impressed her audience with that gentle but most persistent authority which had enabled her to render her scheme a national Indian institution, and one which, in half a century, had spread throughout that Empire.



## X

### ROME AND PARIS

Arrival in Rome—Yachting in the Mediterranean—Francesco Crispi and the Triple Alliance—His African ambitions—Eritrea and Abyssinia—On leave in England—The Freedom of the city and the Mansion House speech—Over to Clondeboy—The Helen's Bay station—His rectorial address at St. Andrews—His definition of the 'equipment' of success—His appointment to Paris—Unsuitability of this appointment—The Siamese conflict—Press campaign against Lord Dufferin—His reply—Bicycle lessons in the Bois.

#### (I)

IN the last week of December, 1888, Lord Dufferin landed at Brindisi after an absence from Europe of over four years. Instead of returning immediately to England he took the train to Naples, where he had the unexpected pleasure of finding Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone. The Liberal leader no longer bore him any resentment for his dalliance with Lord Beaconsfield, and Lord Dufferin had himself forgiven his former chief for having sent Lord Ripon to India and for his most irritating views upon the condition of Ireland. They were in fact delighted to meet each other and Lord Dufferin pressed the Gladstones to visit him in Rome. Mr. Gladstone considered this invitation with the greatest deliberation. On the one hand there was, as he afterwards wrote, 'the great social attraction of your protection and companionship so kindly promised'; on the other hand there were his own serious doubts regarding the policy of the Italian Government.

How could he possibly keep quiet regarding the 'false position which Italy has assumed by meddling with ultramontane affairs'? Even his silence might be construed as an unexpressed criticism of the Italian Government. 'I am crossed,' he wrote to Lord Dufferin, 'by a scruple about you. Were I known to have had much intercourse with you at Rome—and my visit would be worth little without it—an uncharitable world might try to make you in some way responsible for my erratic opinions.'

The visit, therefore, did not take place. This was perhaps as well, since on arriving in Rome the Dufferin's found that Her Majesty's Embassy was little more than a dilapidated villa. The rooms were small and cold, the furniture was falling to pieces, the staircase was both mean and pretentious, and the innumerable glass doors had been decorated with stout cupids lovingly portrayed by the inexperienced brush of Walburga, Lady Paget. It was some time before the charm of that little house made the slightest appeal to Lord and Lady Dufferin. The Porta Pia in those days gave almost directly upon the open Campagna and Lord Dufferin found that he could gallop his hunters almost up to his own front door. The garden also, was a consolation. There was a sweep of lawn; to the left, the great city wall was enlivened by Florentine irises; and in the background clumps of bamboos, of oleander and of tube-roses clustered around the stone-rimmed ponds. During the first few weeks, however, the cold of a European winter chilled his bones. He retired to his bed and emerged only to fulfill his more pressing social duties. 'The weather here,' he wrote, 'is awful. I have neither had

time to look into the shop windows, nor to see a picture or a sight of any description, my whole day being spent inside a brougham leaving cards, a most vain and useless employment.'

It is not surprising that, being so sensitive to cold, he did not desire to return immediately to an even more northern climate. In February he paid a hurried visit to London, but returned to Rome after nine days. He postponed his leave until the summer, and even then it was not till August, nine months after landing in Europe, that he visited Clandeboye. As the spring spread over Italy he came to tolerate, and finally to love, his little Roman villa. His family and his friends would travel out to visit him. His eldest son, Lord Ava, was serving with his regiment in India. His second son, Terence, was thinking of entering the diplomatic service. His third son, Basil, was on the eve of going up to Balliol. His fourth son, Frederick, was still at Winchester but would spend uproarious holidays in Rome. His eldest daughter, Helen (who was perhaps closer to him than any of his seven children), was shortly to marry Ronald Munro Ferguson. His other two daughters, Hermione and Victoria, were then aged nineteen and fifteen respectively. He was thus (and it meant a great deal to him) surrounded by a large and adoring domestic circle.

He found Roman Society, whether black or white, extremely agreeable. There were balls at the Barberini Palace and receptions given by Donna Laura Minghetti. It amused him to go to the opera as an almost private individual and to be able, during the intervals, to pay visits from box to box. He liked

the Cardinals and the Roman patricians and the English and other visitors who would flock to Rome. It was pleasant to be able once again to stroll unattended in the Borghese gardens or along the Corso ; it was a relief after the solitary grandeur, the cultural and social aridity, of Calcutta, to be able to drop in at afternoon parties, to listen to and to stimulate agreeable conversation, to visit picture galleries and to attend the theatre. The latter pleasure was, it is true, a rather poignant blessing. He had gone one evening to see Sarah Bernhardt, who was giving a short season in Rome. He had noticed that he had been unable to catch but a few intonations of that *voix d'or* and was distressed, on leaving, when his companions expatiated upon the extraordinary distinctness and purity of Madame Bernhardt's diction. It was then that he first realised that he was becoming seriously deaf.

For the summer of 1890 he moved the headquarters of the Embassy to Sorrento. His yawl *The Lady Hermione* had been sent out to meet him, and in those lovely waters he indulged with boyish delight in his old passion for sailing. As a navigator he was, as has been seen, both daring and competent. He sailed to Sicily and coasted round the southern shores to Syracuse, keeping the watches himself as in the old days of the *Foam*, and in the intervals reading Homer and Thucydides.

He went pilgrimages, also, to those places in Italy which were identified with his mother's memory. I have already described his visit to Florence and to Barberino di Mugello, the little castle in the Appenines. Nor were these his only pilgrimages :

‘When at Castellamare,’ he writes, ‘I took the opportunity of visiting the house in which I joined my mother after my father’s death in 1841. It still belongs to the same family that let it to us—the Actons—its present owner being Admiral Acton, the Minister of Marine and a friend of mine. I recognised its terrace at once, with the exception of a great big tree which puzzled me; but it turned out that the tree was not planted till 1845, though it has now become a father of the forest. If you remember, I have a very pretty drawing of the place—the terrace with pots of flowers and a great awning over it with Vesuvius in the distance.’

In this manner, the sunshine and pleasures of the past were fused again with the enjoyments of the present. He would always aver that his four years in Italy were the happiest of his later life.

(2)

It is not to be supposed, however, that Lord Dufferin’s time as Ambassador was wholly occupied by the pleasures of society, by the delights of cruising in Sicilian waters, or by that gravest of all enjoyments—the search of the past. He had arrived in Rome at a turning point of Italian history, and his diplomatic labours were arduous and prolonged.

His appointment to the Roman Embassy had been warmly welcomed by Italian opinion. The spirit of the Risorgimento had not, at that date, been wholly vulgarised and he was hailed by the Italian press as ‘questo liberalissimo uomo di stato’. They were flattered, moreover, by the fact that a man of such eminence should, immediately after relinquishing the highest of all imperial offices, have accepted a mission

to a smaller Power. The circumstance that he had been born in Florence was adduced as an additional and indeed initial—point in his favour. And even the Pope (who had heard of his excellent relations with the Catholic hierarchy both in Quebec and at Calcutta) pronounced a public allocution in his favour.

It was fortunate that Lord Dufferin should have embarked upon his mission with such favourable auspices, since Italy was at that moment taking her first tentative steps in colonial expansion, and for the first time her traditional friendship with Great Britain was being subjected to strain.

The central figure in the ensuing and unfortunate drama was Francesco Crispi, a Sicilian with a strong admixture of Albanian blood, who had been exiled with Mazzini, who had fought with Garibaldi, and who had since abjured his republican principles on the excellent ground that 'a Republic disunites; a Monarchy unites'. Crispi having witnessed the slow achievement of Italian unity was determined that Italy should quickly cease to be a geographical expression and should aspire without delay to be an equal of the Great Powers. He was thus a firm supporter of the Triple Alliance under which Italy was acclaimed as a partner, if not quite as an equal, by the Courts of Vienna and Berlin. For this admission into the charmed circle of the Great Powers, Francesco Crispi had to pay a heavy price. Prince Bismarck made it a condition of his patronage that Italy should possess an army and even a navy worthy of so distinguished a partnership. He went further. Obsessed as he always was by the dread of a French revenge for 1870, he did all that he could to envenom the relations between Rome and

Paris. Not only did he play upon Italian irritation at the French seizure of Tunis, upon their fears regarding Bizerta, but he encouraged Crispi to find compensation in East Africa; and he supported him in the foolish and dangerous tariff war which he declared upon the French in 1889. The situation, at one moment, became so strained that a Russian army was concentrated against Austria and the Italians lived in daily terror of a French bombardment of Spezzia. In April of 1889 Crispi assured Lord Dufferin that war in Europe appeared to him inevitable.

Meanwhile, however, the high taxation necessitated by Crispi's armament policy and the heavy losses to which Italian commerce was exposed by his tariff war with France, had weakened the Prime Minister's position in his own country. The Italians, at that date, were not at all sure that they wanted to be a Great Power or to possess an Empire overseas. They accused Crispi of being a pawn on Bismarck's chess-board, of deliberately provoking bad relations with France, and of exposing Italy to financial bankruptcy owing to his absurd colonial ambitions. The dismissal of Bismarck, in March, 1890, far from easing Crispi's position, much encouraged the opposition against him. He was accused of corruption and even bigamy. And on January 31, 1891, he fell from power.

Lord Dufferin's own relations with this forceful and dynamic statesman were concerned mainly with his East African and Abyssinian adventures. Already in 1881 the Italians had purchased Assab Bay from a Red Sea Sultan and in 1885 they seized Massowah. Crispi realised that the latter port would, unless possessed of a hinterland, be only an encumbrance.

He thus extended his area of occupation until it reached the frontier of what is now the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. It was evident that the Italians were determined to seize the important Sudanese market of Kassala and Lord Dufferin was instructed to intimate to Signor Crispi that such an extension of the Eritrean boundary would bring him into conflict with British rights and interests. The Italian Prime Minister, after some haggling, gave an assurance (which was never kept) that Kassala would not be occupied. Lord Dufferin was not wholly reassured by these promises :

‘There is,’ he wrote in March, 1890, ‘no doubt that the Italians are fully aware that in order to make Massowah pay it will be necessary for them to open up communications with Kassala and tap the Upper Nile and the Sudan ; and whatever Crispi may now say or mean—and at present, I think he means what he says—it is evident that Italian and Anglo-Egyptian interests may come hereafter into collision.’

That collision was postponed for forty-five years. In the interval Italian attention was diverted from the Sudan to Abyssinia. In 1889 the Emperor Johannes was killed fighting the Dervishes and Menelik reigned in his stead. The young negus, being but insecure upon his throne, concluded with the Italians the Treaty of Ucciali under which, in effect, he placed Abyssinia under an Italian protectorate. Lord Dufferin warned both Crispi and the British Government that once Menelik had established his own authority in Abyssinia he would repudiate that treaty and turn upon the Italians. This forecast was amply fulfilled on the first



of March, 1896, when the Italian army was completely defeated at Adowa.

Lord Dufferin's task meanwhile was to prevent what he foresaw would be an increasing Italian entanglement in East Africa from developing into any serious Anglo-Italian conflict. Having (for the moment) prevented the Italians from seizing Kassala he realised that, with the extension of Italian ambitions towards Abyssinia itself, some more comprehensive and precise agreement would be necessary. He found Signor Crispi, anxious though he was to secure British friendship and support against France, even more avid for colonial territory in East Africa. The negotiations were therefore much prolonged, and it was not until March, 1891, after Crispi had been succeeded by Giolitti, that Lord Dufferin was able to sign with the Marchese di Rudini a protocol under which the British and Italian spheres of influence in East Africa were satisfactorily defined. This protocol (which came into renewed prominence during the Anglo-Italian crisis of 1935) was the main diplomatic achievement of his Roman mission.

(3)

Lord Dufferin's retirement to the little house by the Porta Pia did not mean that he had ceased to be an eminent figure in his own country. In May of 1889 he returned to England upon six months leave of absence and on the 29th of that month he was accorded the freedom of the city of London. He was suffering from gastric fever at the time and the subsequent banquet at the Mansion House was a trying ordeal. In his speech on that occasion he paid

an eloquent tribute to the Indian Civil Service and to those 'able and disinterested personages' who 'are content to labour, indifferent to their own fame, despising the snares of notoriety, provided only that the honour and moral and material interests of the British Empire shall extend and flourish'. He drew an imaginative picture of the conditions of responsibility and discomfort under which these ardent officials were compelled to work, and in a single phrase of rhetoric he brought home to his city audience the disabilities from which they suffered. 'For the voices,' he said, 'of their children are not heard within their homes.' This sentence was warmly applauded, and his peroration was considered at the time to be among the masterpieces of imperial oratory. It does not to-day strike us as comparable with Lord Curzon's magnificent farewell to India, but as a statement of Lord Dufferin's own conception of imperialism it is arresting enough :

'To our fond imagination, in whatever distant lands we may be serving, amid all our troubles and anxieties, England rises to our view as she did to the men of Cressy, like a living presence, a sceptred isle amid inviolate seas, a dear and honoured mistress, the mother of a race which it may truly be said has done as much as any other for the general moral and material happiness of mankind, and which has done more than any other to spread abroad the benefits of ordered liberty and constitutional government, which has learnt the secret of gradually weaving the new material of progress into the outworn tissues of ancient civilisations, and of reconciling every diversity of barbarous tribe to the discipline of a properly regulated existence ; whose beneficent and peaceful commercial flag illumines every sea, and pavilions every shore ; whose

language is already destined ere the close of this century to be spoken by a greater number of millions than any other tongue and the chief necessity for whose prosperity and welfare is the continuance of universal peace, and the spread of amity and goodwill among the nations.'

Having delivered himself of this oration he retired to his bed at Claridge's Hotel and remained there for a fortnight.

In August, after a week's yachting in the Solent, he crossed to Ireland. He travelled via Dublin and Belfast and from there took the little train that runs along the Lough. The familiar stations passed him one by one—Holywood, Cultra, Craigavad. The smell of the seaweed puffed into his carriage and across the water lay Carrickfergus and the line of the Antrim coast. The train stopped at Clondeboy station which he had rechristened Helen's Bay. He was home again after five years.

The station at Helen's Bay was in those days (and indeed until the advent of the motor-car eliminated the train journey from Belfast) one of the most fantastic in the United Kingdom. Just before entering the station the train crossed a high bridge which spanned the two and a half mile avenue between Clondeboy and the sea. The station itself did not, at first sight, differ from the other stations of the Belfast and County Down Railway. There were the same long low buildings, the same weather-boarding painted a faint pink, the same 'approach' where the jaunting cars waited for possible passengers, their drivers standing up upon the footboard waving expectant whips. Yet the last door on the left opened upon a little corridor which in its turn led to Lord

Dufferin's private waiting-room. This room was, on the whole, the least successful room that I have ever known. It managed to combine the atmosphere of a room which is used too little with the atmosphere of a room which is used too much. It had about it all that sense of the provisional, the transitory and the promiscuous which we associate with public waiting-rooms; its solitary window looked out upon the platform; and its silence was disturbed by the passage of trains, the shuffling of passengers, and the cry of the porter, which (for he was of County Down) was both loud and long. At the same time it exuded the musty depression of something deserted and forlorn: the key with which the station-master opened the door rasped in a rusty lock: dead flies innumerable lined the mantelpiece and the sill; the window, which looked out on to the platform and the lives of men was blurred with dust. These contrasts were rendered all the more disturbing by the disparity which existed between the proportions of the room and the furniture which it contained. In construction and design it was nothing more than a little room in a country railway station. Its furniture, however, and ornaments were those of a Victorian parlour. There was a circular table in the centre covered with an Indian cloth. The five chairs which were arranged around it had blue cushions embroidered with a coronet. There was a little red carpet with a criss-cross pattern and vague black flowers in each diamond square. There was a hard sofa in a corner and three cold Spode vases on the mantelpiece. There was an enormous composite engraving of the House of Lords in 1862 with a key-plan hanging framed below it. There were

also (for some unfathomable reason) three billiard balls in a little box with a glass top. And there were four, or it may have been five, Landseer engravings in frames of light-coloured wood.

Yet there were stranger things to come. Having rested in the waiting-room, the visitor was then conducted back into the corridor and down a flight of steep stone steps which led to the level of the avenue. On reaching the bottom he was startled to find himself in a large pentagonal forecourt. The walls of this Propylæa were constructed of black granite irregularly morticed together with thick cement. There were a large number of turrets, pinnacles, barbicans, embrasures, machicoulis, ramparts, merlons, battlements, and arrow-slits. The avenue passed through this outer ward at right angles to the railway line. To the right there was a high portcullised gateway which led down to the sea. To the left an even more imposing feudal arch disguised the railway bridge. Each of these two arches was decorated with a large coat of arms—dexter, a lion with a tressure flory counterflory or, sinister a heraldic tiger ermine.

To-day, the avenue, the forecourt, the waiting-room, and indeed the railway station, are seldom used. The tressure of the lion has become more counterflory than ever ; some of the balls have dropped from the coronets ; and the arrow-slits are hidden in ivy. But on that August morning of 1889 the whole outer ward glistened in welcome. The carriages were waiting at the door of the staircase ; the agent and the tenants formed a mounted escort ; Lord Dufferin, accompanied by Ronald Munro Ferguson, his impending son-in-law, drove in happy triumph to his home.

‘To-day,’ he wrote to his son in India, ‘is beautiful and I am going to take a sail on the lake. The place looks really lovely and a good number of the younger trees have grown immensely. I do not see much difference in the older ones.’

A few days later came a vast civic reception in the Ulster Hall at Belfast. Nor were these the only honours which were conferred upon him. In December, 1889, he was elected Rector of St. Andrews University, and two years later he was offered, and accepted, the post of Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. His rectorial address is of interest, since he deliberately chose as his theme ‘my own personal experience as to what equipments I have myself found most useful in the battle of life’.

He began his address by making two assumptions, neither of which would be accepted as unquestionable axioms by a youthful audience of to-day. ‘I assume,’ he said, ‘as a premise that two principles, the love of God and the love of your native land, are to you as the breath of your nostrils and the permanent as well as the ultimate objects of your existence.’ He told his youthful audience to take careful stock of their own aptitudes before choosing a profession and he begged them to remember that ‘life is a succinct, definitely circumscribed, period of time, sufficiently long to get a great deal done in it, and yet not long enough to oppress us with the idea of exhausting and unending effort’. He then passed to the question of education, and while contending that the classics were wrongly taught at school, made an eloquent appeal for Greek and Latin, which he considered to be ‘an essential part of the education of every gentleman’.

After referring to the importance of modern languages, he dwelt at length upon the need of acquiring such mastery over one's native language as to be able to avoid the stilted metaphor or the ornate simile. Even more self-revealing was that portion of his address in which he spoke of a 'right judgment of things':

'Half the mistakes in life arise from people revolving things in a casual and half-hearted manner. My practice has always been, and I heartily recommend it to my young hearers, no matter how long and how carefully I may have been chewing the cud of reflection, never to adopt a final determination without shutting myself up in a room for an hour or a couple of hours and then, with all the might and intellectual force which I was capable of exerting, digging down into the very depths and remotest crannies of the problem, until the process had evolved clear and distinct in my mind's eye, a conclusion as sharp and cleanly cut as the facets of a diamond. Nor, when once this conclusion was arrived at, have I ever allowed myself to reconsider the matter, unless some new element affecting the question, hitherto unnoticed or unknown, should be disclosed.'

Was that in fact the 'equipment' which he had found most valuable in his sixty-five years of life? Without it, he might well have remained a gifted and cultured aristocrat endowed with rich personal charm. The advice which he gave to the students of St. Andrews revealed, had they known it, that obstinate caution, that infinite capacity for taking pains, which was the very foundation of his success. For a few more years he was to retain that equipment unimpaired.

In December of 1891 Lord Dufferin was appointed to succeed Lord Lytton as Ambassador to France. He reached Paris in the early days of March, 1892.

## (4)

Much as I venerate the British Foreign Service, and warmly as I welcome its long record of success, yet I remain to this day bewildered by the diplomatic appointments which are made or approved by successive Foreign Secretaries. They have at their disposal the richest and the most varied human material ; the slightest consideration of the psychology or temper of foreign countries should suffice to convince them that an Ambassador who would be admirably suited to one type of post would be unlikely, owing to his own character or past record, to be welcomed or even trusted at some other type of capital ; yet they persist in ignoring the temperament and the existing prejudices of foreign Powers and move their Ambassadors and Ministers as if indeed they were pieces on a draught-board, each possessing exactly the same shape and value upon any square.

Yet, when I look back upon the years, the strangest of all appointments seems that of Lord Dufferin to Paris in 1892. It passes my comprehension how Lord Salisbury can for one moment have imagined that Lord Dufferin would be a welcome Ambassador to the Third Republic, since his name had for more than thirty years been associated with all the most resounding failures in the long and not inglorious history of French diplomacy.

It all began in 1860 when the French people and army were 'partant pour la Syrie'. I have already described how, when the armies of Generals Beaufort and Chanzy arrived at Beyrout, they found that Lord Dufferin, who had been despatched in haste by Lord



Palmerston, had already, and without awaiting the arrival of his fellow Commissioners, come to something like an agreement with the Sultan's emissary. With unparalleled duplicity, the rôle, nay the glory, of the French army had been negatived in advance. The French forces returned to Marseilles with the conviction that Great Britain, by her cynical support of the Druse assassins, had behaved with treacherous arrogance and violent perfidy. Nor does this Syrian episode in fact constitute one of the brightest pages in our rough island story.

In the Egyptian matter, again, it was Lord Dufferin, more than any other man, who had tricked M. de Freycinet into his 'rupture néfaste' with the policy of M. Gambetta. They believed, indeed, that his cunning on that occasion had been so unscrupulous as to remain a *locus classicus* in the history of Fabian diplomacy. He had allowed M. de Freycinet to suppose that England would do nothing without France's collaboration. He had allowed the Concert of Europe to suppose that the whole Egyptian question was being discussed by the Conference of Ambassadors at Constantinople. He had allowed the Sultan to imagine that England would only act in Egypt on the basis of a definite Anglo-Turkish Convention. He had spun out the negotiations until the British troops had landed at Alexandria and Sir Garnet Wolseley was advancing on Tel-el-Kebir. And thereafter Great Britain had seized Egypt behind the backs of France, Europe and the Sultan; and it had been Lord Dufferin who had himself laid the foundations of that system under which, in spite of all her pledges, Great Britain had remained in Egypt ever since.

Nor was this all. In 1885, it had been Lord Dufferin who, with violent arrogance, had cancelled the French treaty with King Theebaw, had sent an army to Mandalay, had annexed Burmah, and had added to his own title the additional name of Ava as a constant reminder of France's discomfiture and of the fact that, in acquiring Burmah's ancient capital, he had added yet another jewel to the already cumbrous regalia of the British crown.

Obviously this new Ambassador was a sworn enemy of France. Had he not stayed with Prince Bismarck at Varzin? Had he not, but a few months before, encouraged and supported Signor Crispi in his violent and indeed atrocious campaign against French commerce and interests? It was obvious that the British Government (who were palpably still under the influence of the old man of Friedrichsruh) had sent their most redoubtable diplomatist to Paris for the sole purpose of wrecking any prospect of a Franco-Russian alliance.

Lord Salisbury, had he given the matter a moment's thought, should have realised that it would be in such terms that the French public and the French press would interpret so surprising an appointment. If the idea ever occurred to him, he would have dismissed it as mere pique on the part of an excitable nation. Yet in fact the French public were not, in that year 1892, in a mood to take any objective view of their own misadventures. The tragic events of 1870-1871, the more recent hysteria of Boulangism, were still vivid memories to that unhappy generation; the Third Republic had not, as yet, established itself in the hearts of its people; France was passing through

one of those phases of discouragement and suspicion which from time to time come to blur the sunlight of the Latin genius. Already the first disturbing intimations of the Panama scandal were being bruited by Micros in the *Libre Parole*. The French were already experiencing the first sullen raindrops of that thunderstorm of internecine strife which culminated a few years later in the Dreyfus controversy. The Russian alliance, which acted as so useful a sedative, was at that time only an aspiration, impatiently and even feverishly desired. And here was Lord Dufferin, the most formidable of Queen Victoria's diplomatists — 'that acute and dangerous man' as the *Figaro* described him — determined to wreck all hope of a Franco-Russian understanding and to perpetuate the domination of England and Germany upon the principle of divide and rule.

## (5)

His mission to Paris coincided with an acute controversy over Siam which confirmed the French in their very worst suspicions. The British Government, desiring to maintain Siam as an independent buffer State between Burmah and French Indo-China, were much disturbed when in February, 1892, the French claimed that their protectorate over Annam extended as far as the Mekong River. Lord Salisbury thereupon concluded an agreement with Siam giving her jurisdiction over the Shan State of Kyaing Chaing, which was situated on both sides of the Mekong. The French were indignant at any such agreement having been concluded without consultation with them and claimed this territory for themselves. In May, 1893,

they followed up this claim by charging Siam with wanton aggression, by declaring war upon her, by sending gunboats up the Mekong, by proclaiming a blockade of the Siamese coast, and by ordering all neutral vessels to leave Bangkok. It seemed at one moment as if France would absorb Siam even as she had absorbed Cochin-China, Annam, Cambodia and Tongking. Lord Rosebery, who had in the meantime succeeded Lord Salisbury at the Foreign Office, was determined to forestall this danger. He first broke the blockade by ordering the British ships to remain at Bangkok and by notifying the French accordingly. He then supported the King of Siam in his rejection of the French terms of peace, which entailed the concession of 100,000 square miles of territory, or one-third of his kingdom. And he then obliged the French Government, through Lord Dufferin, to abate their maximum demands and to accept the modified conditions which were eventually included in the Treaty of Peace signed between Siam and France in October, 1893. There still remained the complicated problem of demarcating the resultant boundaries between Burmah, Indo-China and Siam. The negotiations pursued their embittered course throughout the terms of Lord Dufferin's tenancy of the Paris Embassy and were only concluded in January, 1896. And the French public formed the not unnatural conviction that the man who had deprived them of Burmah in 1885 was in 1893 also depriving them of Siam.

The suspicion he aroused owing to his past record, the resentment engendered by the Siamese crisis, were, however, as nothing compared to the indignation occasioned by his alleged intrigues against a Franco-

Russian understanding. It was stated (and predominantly by the Russian Ambassador) that the British Government had furnished Lord Dufferin with limitless golden sovereigns with which to suborn the Paris press and to bribe the French deputies. The French Ambassador in London, M. Waddington, was, they said, a party to this sinister conspiracy. 'Il est triste,' wrote one Paris journal, 'que dans cette lutte avec les habiletés anglaises, nous ayons à la fois contre nous un ambassadeur d'Angleterre détestant la France et un ambassadeur de France dévoué à l'Angleterre.' The Quai d'Orsay, it was widely rumoured, had in their possession documents which proved conclusively that Lord Dufferin had already bought the consciences of half the French deputies in a sense opposed to the Russian alliance.

The British Ambassador was much distressed by these calumnies. 'The whole of France,' he wrote, 'is one wild sea of denunciation, suspicion and mutual recrimination, and even the phrases of 1793 are coming back into use.' He determined to counter this campaign of defamation by what he described as 'a risky experiment'. In February, 1893, at the annual dinner of the British Chamber of Commerce in Paris, he referred in most undiplomatic language to the accusations which had been made against him. 'I have seen myself,' he said, 'repeatedly accused . . . of the most disgraceful and abominable conduct, of acts which, if proved, would justify my being summoned to the bar of a criminal court':

'I do not hesitate,' he continued, 'to take this opportunity to say that the whole series of assertions which has been so industriously propagated, including the

absurd statement that I arrived in France furnished with an enormous sum of money—three million francs I think was the sum named—to be applied to the corruption of the French Press and of French politicians with a view of breaking up the Franco-Russian alliance, is not only untrue in the widest acceptance of that term, but that there is not and never has been a shade or shadow of substance in any of the various allegations which from time to time have been issued with a view to building up this inconceivable mystification . . . The fact is that since I arrived in Paris I have not spent a sixpence that has not gone into the pocket of my butcher or baker, or to that harmful but necessary lady, the avenger of the sin of Adam, whose bills every householder who values his domestic peace pays with alacrity and without examination—I mean the family *Couturière*.’

The French were amused, and a little impressed, by this outspoken repudiation. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, meeting Lord Dufferin a few nights later, said, ‘*Savez-vous que votre discours a eu un très grand succès ?*’ Yet the rumours and the defamation did not finally cease until it transpired that the documents alleged to be in the possession of the Quai d’Orsay were in fact the work of a notorious forger who claimed that he had abstracted them from the British Embassy. These documents, when eventually read out in the Chamber, were so fantastic, that the scandal ended (as do so many French scandals) in an outburst of general laughter.

These controversies, none the less, cast a cloud over the four and a half years which Lord Dufferin spent in Paris. Was it that the French were really intractable ? In Canada, in Russia, in Turkey, in India and in Italy he had always been able to soothe, to conciliate and to

please. He hated criticism and he loved popularity. Had his tact, his far-famed charm, lost something of their potency? Or was it that these Republicans, for all their intelligence, were impervious to the elegance, the hospitality, the glamour and the agreeable conversation which he so lavishly spread before them?

He would ponder a little sadly on such matters as he took his early morning bicycle lesson in the Bois. Up and down he would wobble between the Porte Maillot and the Porte Dauphine, while his instructor ran panting beside him. ('Tournez à droite, Excellence, mais virez donc à droite.') He was not alone in undertaking this strange matutinal exercise. Over there was Marthe Darthy, in bloomers, and Marguerite Duval, and Tristan Bernard and Jules Lemaître. Up and down he would wobble from eight-thirty to nine and then, a little wearily, he would enter his victoria and drive slowly up the Avenue du Bois. Paris, certainly was very beautiful on a May morning, but perhaps a trifle unkind. What would Edouard Drumont have to say about him to-day in the *Libre Parole*, or Arthur Meyer in the *Gaulois*, or Fernand Xau in that new and perplexing paper, *Le Journal*? And to-morrow there was to be the big reception at the Embassy. The Russian Ambassador would certainly absent himself. But Princess Mathilde might come, and the Duc d'Aumâle, and the Duchesse de Rohan. Or would they also, after that article in *Gil Blas*, avoid the British Embassy? Then there was a spritualistic séance this afternoon with Josephin Péladan and his Rosicrucians. That might be fun. And the Norwegian play, 'Le Canard Sauvage' at the Théâtre Libre. And there was that invitation from M. Lavassor to visit his

works on Saturday and to see the new horseless carriage which he and M. Panhard had invented and which was propelled, it was said, by paraffin. And, yes, of course, dear little Katie had arrived the night before from Hungary with her little boy.

On reaching the Embassy, he hurried upstairs to the breakfast room, since he was a trifle late. He greeted his young sister-in-law affectionately. And upon the curls of her youngest son, he placed his large brown hand.



## XI

### FIN DE SIÈCLE

Walmer Castle—Basil Blackwood—Mr. Carton—Nervous condition of French public opinion—The Panama Scandal—Anarchist outrages—The murder of President Carnot—Lord Dufferin's sympathetic attitude—The Franco-Russian entente—Lord Dufferin's tactful sympathy—He retires from the public service—His versatility—His architectural ventures—Clandeboyne Chapel—The Tennis Court and the Banqueting Hall—The Londonderry visit—Lord Ava and Lady Helen Stewart—Lord Dufferin as a scholar—Greek inscriptions—The climax of his glory.

#### (I)

THE next place where I remember seeing my uncle was on the bastion-terrace of Walmer Castle. It was the summer of 1894 and we had, I suppose, gone down there for the day. We went out onto the terrace from the little drawing-room and there he was, in a very strange hat (it must have been a homburg) and a large tweed cape draped over his shoulders. He took us to see the room in which the Duke of Wellington died and the little balcony with the iron railing and the view of the tumbled yellow waves of the sea. I asked a great many questions but I do not think he heard them. He smiled courteously, dropped his eyeglass and answered 'Yeth, yeth'. And when we said good-bye, he gave me and my brother a golden sovereign each. He pulled them out of his waistcoat pocket between his finger and thumb and pressed them kindly into our receptive hands. 'Oh, *thank you*, Uncle Dufferin. *Look*, Mummy! *look* what Uncle Dufferin has given us!'



EQUESTRIAN PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR  
*from a photograph taken in Bulgaria in 1895*

I remember being told that he had sailed across to Walmer from France. I was much impressed by this information and when we reached Dover on the way back even my father was excited to see whether the *Lady Hermione* was lying in the harbour. But my recollections of that first visit of 1894 are blurred for me by the superimposed pictures of staying at Walmer during the whole ensuing summer of 1895. That, at least, is very distinct in my memory.

On that occasion, the Dufferins were only a few days at Walmer after which they sailed for Cowes and my own parents remained in possession. Before Lord Dufferin left there was a large party at the Castle and my brothers and I were only allowed in after luncheon. I remember the drawing-room being full of men and women and that my cousin Basil, who had just left Balliol, came and spoke to us. He was dark like my uncle, and spoke with the same slow voice and smile. He was engaged at the time upon the drawings for Belloc's *Bad Child's Book of Beasts*, and he addressed most of his remarks to my eldest brother, who was four years older than myself, and, as such, dressed in an Eton suit. It is this suit which figures in some of the illustrations. My brother, even as a little boy, was much addicted to conversation and he answered Basil's questions with acumen and with verve. 'Freddy,' Basil asked him, 'are you *fin de siècle* or only a ritualist?' 'A ritualist,' my brother answered, and the men who were standing by appeared to be much amused. 'And what,' they said to him, 'are you going to be when you grow up?' 'I shall be an Ambassador,' he answered, 'like Uncle Dufferin.' 'Or,' he added, 'if the worst comes to the worst,

I shall be a Member of Parliament.' Hearing the laughter that this provoked, my uncle joined the group slowly, putting his two fingers behind his ear. 'Very good!' he smiled. 'Excellent! Do not you agree, Gladstone?' Mr. Herbert Gladstone sniggered assent. I felt proud of my brother for having created so agreeable an impression and gazed at him with admiring eyes. And then a few days later we watched the *Lady Hermione* glide off to Cowes. We were left to enjoy the Castle by ourselves.

I do not think that we behaved very well. We would bring seaweed into the drawing-room, or engage the tourists in conversation, or run obstacle races along the battlements, jumping from bastion to bastion, or roll cannon balls along the sloping passages, or hide under Mr. Pitt's bed. My brothers (most unfortunately) discovered that I was frightened of the Duke of Wellington and would tell me that they were constantly seeing the old gentleman sitting with his telescope upon his little balcony, or stalking in a huge black cape among the cannon. I confided my apprehensions to Miss Plimsoll. 'Nonsense, dear,' she answered, 'he has been dead these many years.' That was small comfort.

I remember also the moat garden, and the way my mother would pick the fuchsia flowers and make them dance together one in each hand, with their four petals spread out like ballet skirts, their little petunia slips beneath, and their long stamens pirouetting below. Then there was the occasion when Sir Francis and Lady Villiers with their three sons came to spend the day with us. We walked to the railway station to meet them. We were introduced to the

three sons, Eric, Gerald, and Algernon ; the distaste engendered by this introduction was mutual and immediate. My parents had imagined that love, and not hatred, would be born from this encounter ; they sent us off to gambol happily together under the trees. There was a steep bank, ending in brambles, down which one could roll. We rolled and rolled. The three Villiers boys, who were dressed in spotless flannels, refused to roll. Our sense of hospitality deserted us ; we went on rolling, regardless both of their presence and of the recent presence of a herd of cows. The three Villiers boys sat gingerly on a log ; a spotless and revolted trio. It was not a successful party, and my father, before luncheon, was quite cross and sent us off to change our clothes.

The porter at Walmer was a bearded man of the name of Carton. He was lodged in the rooms off the lower ward and it was he who would conduct the tourists round the castle. I was fond of that ward since it contained a number of enormous ram-rods arranged in racks. One could pull the ram-rod out of its rack and the great muffled head would fall upon the stones with a dull thud. Mr. Carton (who was a disapproving man) used to discourage these experiments. 'Now none of that,' he would shout, 'them is Her Majesty's property.' He would inform us also that most of the furniture in the Castle was 'a heirloom'. I was entranced by this information and told Miss Plimsoll. 'Nonsense, dear,' she said, 'you must have misheard Mr. Carton.' 'But I didn't, Miss Plimsoll, truly I didn't. He said the ram-rods were heirlooms, just the same as the Duke's bed was a heirloom. He did truly.' 'Remember, dear, I have

often told you not to credit all that people say.' Being unsatisfied with this evasion, I asked my father. 'What?' he said. 'Oh, you mean the things in the house. Yes, I suppose they are in a way. You must be very careful not to touch.'

But it was not owing to the heirlooms that Mr. Carton lives in my memory. One afternoon, when pacing the draw-bridge he observed me sitting on the moat-lawn playing quite quietly with two fuchsia blooms. 'That grass is damp,' he shouted to me morosely. 'Oh no, Mr. Carton, it isn't. Truly it isn't.' 'It was that way,' he answered, leaning over the parapet and shaking his black beard at me, 'it was that way, my poor daughter came to her death. Inflammation of the bowels, that's what she got. All along of sitting on damp grass.' I rose hurriedly at that and made a mixed murmur of apology and condolence.

'Mummy,' I asked at luncheon, 'what is inflammation of the bowels; Mr. Carton told me . . .'

'Hush, dear,' interrupted Miss Plimsoll, 'you mustn't say such dreadful things. You really mustn't. How often have I told you?'

'But Mr. Carton said so, he did truly. . . .'

That autumn Lord Dufferin resigned his position as Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports and my connection with Walmer ceased.

## (2)

The position of British Ambassador to France during the last decade of the nineteenth century was one which, as I have indicated, required the greatest

tact and circumspection. Lord Dufferin, it is true, had left Paris before Anglo-French relations were exposed to the strain of the Fashoda incident, the Boer War and the Affaire Dreyfus. Yet during the whole time that he spent in the Rue du Faubourg St. Honoré he was well aware of some underlying tension. On the British side, there were the memories of past enmity, those differences in culture and temperament which will forever render co-operation difficult, acute colonial rivalry, and the remains of those Puritan feelings which, at their worst, led to what Swinburne called 'strident anti-gallican cackle', and at their best inspired quite reasonable people with the false but most complacent fiction that the French are a 'volatile' race. On the French side, during that restless *fin de siècle*, there was a state of nervous exasperation with which we, in England, failed to sympathise and which we totally failed to understand.

It was due, predominantly, to a feeling of weakness, both internal and external. The memories of former hegemony under Louis XIV and Napoleon contrasted bitterly with the apparent ineffectiveness of the foreign and colonial policy of the Third Republic. Europe, at that date, was at the height of her 'scramble for Africa' and the French people were convinced that other countries were obtaining too great a share of the spoils. Germany, in this respect, appeared to be their only friend. In every quarter of the globe—in Siam, in Nigeria, in the Congo basin, in the Sudan, at Harar, in Madagascar and at Muscat—French ambitions were continuously being opposed, and sometimes thwarted, by the intolerable greed and power of British imperialism. These external dis-



appointments came to envenom an internal situation which was septic in the extreme.

It is often forgotten that the Third Republic did not actually find itself until the Great Exhibition of 1900. The sharp individualism, the profound lack of mutual respect, which is characteristic of the French people will always render them the least equable race on earth and the most difficult to rule. In the last decade of the nineteenth century they were exposed to ordeals which would have disturbed the civic calm even of the most static nation. The Panama Scandals of 1892-1893 disclosed the close connection which has always existed between republican politics and high finance. The scenes which during that scandal took place in the Chamber led to that most dangerous of all democratic states of mind—the hatred and contempt felt by the average elector for the representative whom he had elected. There were battles across the floor of the Palais Bourbon; there were scufflings in the street; and there were ceaseless duels, of which the most notorious was that between Déroulède and Clemenceau. Every day one read of denunciations and suicides. The exposure of Baron Reinach's dealings with the deputies involved the whole Chamber in public reprobation. To the people of France each single Deputy was a potential traitor or 'chequard'; and upon the boulevards and in the cabarets the dishonesty of their elected representatives became a theme for lampoon, for broad-sheet, and for song. Caran d'Ache entitled his current annual *Chic et le Chèque*. France's confidence in her own institutions had been profoundly undermined.

To this loss of confidence was added a more im-

mediate reason for anxiety. The wave of anarchist activity which swept France between 1890 and 1894 has never fully been examined or explained. During the course of 1893 a situation amounting to a reign of terror was established in Paris. In 1891 the May Day celebrations had led to a clash with the police at which nine people lost their lives. In March, 1892, the house of M. Benoit, who had acted as counsel for the prosecution of certain anarchists, was blown to pieces by a bomb. A fortnight later a similar outrage was perpetrated against the apartment of the Public Prosecutor. Both Foyot's and Véry's restaurants were damaged by grenades flung in through the windows, when serious loss of life was caused. Attacks with dynamite were made against police stations throughout the country, and in December, 1893, the Chamber of Deputies was itself the object of a bomb outrage. Something approaching to panic spread throughout the city, and landlords found difficulty in letting apartments in buildings tenanted by any prominent personage. The anarchist movement culminated in the stabbing of President Carnot at Lyons on June 24, 1894. It was the general horror created by this murder which at last nerved France to unite in suppressing destructive anarchism throughout the country.

Lord Dufferin, being an imaginative and warm-hearted man, was one of the first Englishmen to appreciate the tribulation through which France was passing. He refrained from any comment upon the internal situation, but did all that he could to assuage the wounds caused by external fears and disappointments. He had many and prolonged conversations with M. Hanotaux, the Foreign Secretary, in which

he endeavoured to dispel the suspicions of that ardent anglophobe and to lay the foundations for some comprehensive Anglo-French agreement. Although these conversations led to nothing practical (and were subsequently wiped out by the Fashoda incident) they did at least convince the French Cabinet that the possibility of some understanding with England was something more than a fantastic dream. And in a speech which he delivered in Paris in March of 1894, Lord Dufferin appealed for a better sense of proportion in words which made more than a transitory impression upon French opinion :

‘France of late has shown, as have done the other nations of Europe, considerable colonial activity, and as we ourselves have for long been engaged in similar colonial activity, we occasionally run up against each other in the cane brakes of Africa, or in the fever jungles of Indo-China. But what are these desultory troubles and local considerations in comparison with the great stream of tendency, to two such glorious nations who from the dawn of history have together held aloft the standard of civilisation and progress in every line and walk of human enterprise? They are but as the ripple and angry splashing which mark the occasional sands and shoals of a mighty river which rushes with unrivalled majesty along its appointed ways.’

It was in this speech that, with typical adroitness, he made a passing but most pointed allusion to the ‘magnanimity and sense of honour of the Russian Emperor’. It was this allusion which gave to his speech so sweet a sound in French ears. It dispelled for ever the fiction that Lord Dufferin was working against a Franco-Russian alliance. Already, in 1893,



THE MARQUIS OF DUFFERIN AND AVA  
IN HIS UNIFORM AS VICE ADMIRAL OF ULSTER  
*from the portrait by Henrietta Rae painted in 1901 in the inner hall  
of Clondeboye*

a Russian fleet under Admiral Avellan had visited Toulon, and Russian sailors had been received by the Paris crowds with a rapturous enthusiasm which left them dumbfounded. In October, 1896, the Tsar Nicolas II himself came to Paris and a great review was held in his honour upon the plains of Châlons. It was observed that Lord Dufferin drove to this review seated in the Russian Ambassador's carriage. This action, and it was not the least significant, was the last of his diplomatic career. On October 13, 1896, he presented his letters of recall to Félix Faure at the Élysée; on the following day he left Paris, and his official life for ever.

(3)

He was seventy years of age, yet apart from his increasing deafness, he retained the faculties and even the outlook of a young man. 'I have now,' he wrote, 'entered my seventieth year and I am seized by a feeling akin to consternation to perceive that in my feelings and habits of thought and ways of looking out upon the world I am pretty much what I was at five and twenty.'

His versatility remained unconfined. True it is that his early ambition to become a poet had declined into a pleasing aptitude for *vers de société*. His desire to excel as a painter—which had at one moment imposed upon his family the necessity of admiring many large, but most unsuccessful, oil portraits—had been modified into a quite agreeable habit of painting little water colours in the 1830 manner. As a landscape gardener, he could point to the great park at Clandeboye as an unquestioned proof of foresight and composition. As

an architect, he displayed, and was still to display, immense, if misdirected, energy. As a man of letters, he could compose an article or write an introduction with fluent grace. As a yachtsman he had few equals even among the less distinguished members of the Royal Yacht Squadron. His knowledge of Egyptology was above that of the ordinary amateur ; he still read the Greek poets with constancy and painstaking delight ; and his study of the Persian language which Lord Curzon (who despised any branch of knowledge which he had himself not mastered) had so unkindly ridiculed, became a solace and an exercise of his later years. There is a note in his diary, written in December, 1895, which shows the pride which he took in curbing his Sheridan imagination by the discipline of hard schooling :

‘ During this year, I have learned by heart 786 columns of a Persian dictionary, comprising about 24,000 words. Of these I have learned 8000 perfectly, 12,000 pretty well, and 4,000 imperfectly. In three months time I hope to have completely mastered the whole.’

In the course of that same year he read a large amount of Greek, including eleven whole plays by Aristophanes. In such a manner had Byron also applied himself to the study of the Armenian language, hoping (although in vain) that ‘ having something difficult to bight into ’ might provide some hawser for his errant fantasy.

On his retirement into private life, Lord Dufferin seems to have toyed for a time with the idea of writing a history of the Sheridan and Blackwood families. The first sketch of such a conception is included in the

memoir of his mother which he prefixed to the volume of her songs and verses which he edited in 1894. Already while in France he had traced the French Blackwoods to their lair in Poitou ; and had identified the château of the Marquis de Maillé de la Tour Landry as having once belonged to a Sheridan (perhaps a slightly mythical Sheridan) who had been created a Marquis by Louis XV. On his return to England he visited the Sheridan sites in Bath, London, and Hampton Court, and even went so far as to inspect that little tumbledown house at Quilca where Doctor Sheridan and Swift had wrangled together and composed quips and madrigals and riddles. The memoir of his mother is, however, the sole memorial of these pilgrimages ; and in its grace and lucid charm it is a model for all such compositions.

His architectural energy on his return to Clandeboye was resumed with fervour. Already he had reshaped and in fact replaced the old house of his fathers, had created the lakes and park, had driven the two and a half mile avenue to Helen's Bay, had scooped that lavish forecourt, and had erected Helen's Tower upon the hill—that sad symbol of transition, that poignant emblem of memory. He now turned to less ambitious but no less ornate projects.

His first act was to terrace the lawn around the house. As I first remember it, that lawn was separated from the meadow that ran down to lake and river by an abrupt haw-haw or ha-ha, in the manner of Mr. Repton or of Capability Brown. Soon after his return from Paris, Lord Dufferin constructed in its place a wide stone balustrade, which encased the lawn to the east and south, and which was, perhaps too frequently,

intercepted by terra-cotta vases bursting with lobelia and geranium. And at some distance from the house he created a rose-garden shaped in the form of an enormous D.

He then began upon the chapel. In the early days we used, on Sundays, to drive down to Bangor Church. First would come the victoria with its cobs and glistening harness bearing my uncle and aunt. Then would follow the landau, almost equally resplendent, into which were packed the visitors and older cousins. Then would follow the brake which contained Miss Plimsoll, any younger cousins that might be there, my two brothers and myself. The upper servants would follow in a large Bianconi or Bian—a kind of omnibus shaped like an Irish car. The lower servants had to walk. Our entry into Bangor Church had about it the solemnity of a State procession.

The chapel—as indeed the ensuing banqueting hall and *jeu de paume*—was adapted from a series of coach-houses and farm buildings which stood, at a certain distance, to the west of the house. One walked there on Sunday mornings along a little path between the laurels, neatly strewn with black granite chips. A cracked Burmese bell, perilously perched upon the eaves of the wagon shed, summoned us dolefully to prayer. My uncle would walk in front. He did not, as might be supposed, wear a top hat and a frock coat. On the contrary, he wore a double-breasted reefer suiting, a high hat made of black cloth, a white hunting stock secured by a heavy coral pin, and white spats upon his feet. He walked slowly with an ebony stick. My aunt, beside him, wore a bonnet with violet feathers and a bolero embroidered with black beads, under the



shoulders of which escaped her enormous puffed sleeves. In her right hand she carried a black lace parasol ; her left hand, which grasped a prayer book, was hidden in an astrakhan muff. One was not expected to talk on the way to chapel and our feet, therefore, could be heard as we approached, crunching steadily together upon the gravel.

For the door of the chapel my uncle had designed a circular arch with a statue above it encased in a niche. It gave the impression of a smaller and more Celtic version of the portal of San Michele at Pavia. Apart from this, the exterior of the building was almost Methodist in its austerity ; the interior, however—and much to my mother's disquiet—had forgotten all about the Reformation and remembered much too much about Rome. Upon the damp plaster walls hung huge oil paintings in the style of Luini, heavily framed in gold. The curtain which separated the chapel from the vestry was Medicean in its grandeur. The family seats consisted of curule chairs carved in light oak and enriched by blue velvet cushions edged with golden braid and golden tassels. The altar itself was draped in a red velvet cloth patterned with unashamed pomegranates. And let into the wall to the left of the altar was a tablet of (there could be no doubt about it) heathen origin. True it is that the name which figured on this tablet is mentioned in the Bible under II Kings 19. 9. Yet this mention is not in the least laudatory ; it is nothing more than incidental ; nor do I, to this day, know how my uncle justified the presence, in a place of Christian worship, of the cartouche and title of Tirhakah, King of Ethiopia.

It was in this pagan, this almost Italian, setting that

were held the morning and evening services of the Church of Ireland. The servants and the people on the estate would stand up when we entered and the school-mistress would play a wheezy but encouraging little tune upon the harmonium. The curate from Bangor would then enter, combining in his manner extreme deference, acute embarrassment and profound religious convictions. Even in those days I felt sorry for that curate. He was a young man ; a shy young man ; a young man who blushed all too readily and who spoke with a strong County Down accent. My uncle (for his piety was tremendous in its simplicity) would follow the service with the greatest attention. The curate (the beads of perspiration trembling like September dewdrops upon his brow) would begin his sermon. My uncle would crook his two fingers behind his ear and listen as if the curate were not the Rev. Tim Murphy of Bangor Parish Church but Bishop Colenso or Dean Stanley, or Dr. Pusey. To the relief of all present, would come the final hymn. We did not employ *Hymns Ancient and Modern* ; we used the ' Church Hymnal approved by the General Synod of the Church of Ireland '. The harmonium would wheeze out the opening bars, the butler (who possessed a bad baritone voice) would inhale audibly, my uncle would adjust his eyeglass, my cousin Hermie would take a deep cousinly breath, and the whole congregation would burst into impassioned song.

' Jerusalem ! ' we would yell :

' Jerusalem ! Jerusalem !  
Enthronéd once on high,  
Thou favour'd home of God on Earth,  
Thou Heaven below the sky,

Now brought to bondage with thy son  
A curse and grief to see—  
Jerusalem ! Jerusalem !  
Our tears shall flow for thee.'

Having derived much spiritual comfort from this chorus, we received the benediction and then filed out into the rain. The rest of the congregation remained in their places until the sound of our feet had died away upon the gravel.

At luncheon afterwards my uncle would warmly congratulate the curate upon the excellence of his sermon.

(4)

His other architectural efforts were more secular. From the series of old coach-houses and barns which connected the chapel with what still remain the stables, he constructed a Banqueting Hall plus an inside tennis court or *jeu de paume*. We were never quite certain what the banqueting hall was all about. It was a long high room with an arched roof, a platform at one end, a deal floor which squeaked at the slightest touch, and a long range of skylights. In those days it contained some models of sailing ships, the skull of a caribou and some stuffed beavers. To-day it is enlivened with a few oil paintings which had been found quite unworthy of the Gallery (including, I regret to say, the picture of the Duchess of Somerset decorating an urn), and the remains of last year's Christmas tree. It was never, as a room, either impressive or gay. It was not referred to with any great enthusiasm by members of the family. Yet, in

after years, it was used with great effect by the local branch of the Women's Institute.

The Tennis Court, on the other hand, was a constant delight. It was of full size, namely 110 feet by 38, and contained a recess for spectators known technically as the 'dedans'. This recess was furnished with basket-chairs, a few spare models of sailing ships, a stuffed opossum, and some badminton boxes. It was separated from the main court by a net slung across the opening. The court itself was diversified and decorated in the most technical manner. There was the 'tambour' or penthouse; there were the 'batteries'; the 'ais' or gong glimmered at one end; one could identify both the lune and the grille. The three lines (the half-court line, the pass-line, and the service-line) were continued perpendicularly up the walls and terminated in heraldic emblems painted in blue, in scarlet, and in gold. The crescent was there supporting the cap of maintenance; the martlet was there nesting in acute discomfort upon a ducal coronet; and the Hamilton antelope was there, holding his heart in his gentle paws. I never saw the court employed for actual tennis. But my brothers and I would play badminton for hours across a little net slung in the centre of this vast expanse.

These amusements were at times interrupted by the arrival of important visitors. On such occasions we would have our meals in the schoolroom and were expected, in the afternoons, to walk with Miss Plimsoll in the more remote areas of the demesne. I recall a visit from the Lord-Lieutenant, Lord Cadogan, during which we were banished for four whole days. His Excellency, on that occasion, drove in state to Belfast,

and we were allowed to watch his departure from the stable archway. There were postilions in scarlet livery and a large state landau with heavily decorated panels. My brothers and I aroused adverse comment by cheering loudly as the Lord-Lieutenant drove away. Miss Plimsoll said that she was quite sure that His Excellency would think we were mocking him. We weren't mocking in the least; we were merely doing our very best to attract his attention.

Then there was the Londonderry visit, which was a far less formal affair. They arrived in a coach and four, having driven over from Mount Stewart. Their servants followed in a big black fourgon. I found Lord Londonderry one of the most agreeable gentlemen that I had ever met: he gave me a sovereign. Miss Plimsoll was all perky and agog to meet Lady Londonderry who, she assured me, was 'foremost among our reigning society beauties'. I had no eyes for Lady Londonderry. My eyes—enraptured, flickering, but unquestionably adoring—were fixed upon her daughter, Lady Helen Stewart.

She seemed to me diaphanous, encircled by flounces, starlit by her own blue eyes, angelic in the quick, and withal deft, movements of her hands, competent beyond any conception of human competence. I heard her sing. My musical education had been (and still is) lamentably neglected. My father, it is true, exhibited some signs of caring for music in that, when music was played, his head would slightly sway. He was never able, however, to subordinate his temperamental impatience to that fuss about finishing which all good composers are apt to make. I doubt even whether he would have been quite positive about the difference

between Debussy and Beethoven. My mother, on the other hand, never sings at all. She will rise with patriotic dignity if the band plays 'Home, Sweet Home' or 'The Wearing of the Green', since she confuses these familiar melodies with our national anthem. But when she is alone she never, *never*, sings at all.

My musical education had therefore, until I heard Lady Helen, been confined to the songs which our own butler, Mr. Fairbrother, would sing in the pantry; or those which my mother's maid, Miss Seager, would sing to her sewing machine. They were both of the doleful variety. Mr. Fairbrother's songs dealt with noble conduct in the face of danger. There was one, I remember, which contained an eulogy of some captain of a smitten vessel who was determined to be the last to leave his sinking ship. The crew (who loved the man) objected to this sacrifice:

'The Captain cried—"What? *Mutiny?*  
I am the Captain here . . ."

There were other songs which Mr. Fairbrother sang which were less uplifting. There was one, for instance, which was sung to the tune of 'Hiawatha' and which was definitely obscene. But he only hummed that tune when he cleaned the knives.

Miss Seager's tunes were the yearning sort of tune. They expressed aspiration. They were replete with home-sickness, starved sex-life, and economic servitude. They were not suggestive either of gaiety or success.

It was thus a surprise to me that any music could be crisp. Before luncheon, one day, I entered the saloon. I was as clean as Miss Plimsoll could make me, and

I therefore exuded self-display from my brush-wetted hair to my less shiny boots. There were two people in the saloon when I came in. One of them was Lady Helen, who was seated at the piano. The other was my eldest cousin, Archie Ava. I think that, on the whole, he was the best-looking man that I have ever seen. He was also my favourite cousin. He would take me into his little room at the end of the passage and show me pig-sticking spears and polo sticks and regimental badges, and tusks of wild boar. His high spirits enabled him to infect the whole household with gaiety. He would talk to his father as if he were still a Lord in Waiting. He would talk to me as if I were already of his own age. In after years my cousin Basil meant more to me. But at the time my worship for Cousin Archie knew no rival.

Miss Plimsoll for her part, was convinced that dear Lord Ava was in love with that lovely Lady Helen. For once, she may have been right. But there they were together in that wide-lit room, she at the piano and he just gazing out of the window towards Helen's Tower. She strummed a polka upon the piano and sung the words in a low voice :

‘For a capon fine  
Is a dish divine . . .’

That was the first time that I realised that music could be gay as well as either patriotic or yearning. I was overwhelmed by the significance of those lovely words. My cousin banged me on the shoulder. ‘A good tune that?’ he laughed. ‘What do you think about it?’ My eyes were fixed upon Lady Helen. ‘It is *beautiful*,’ I answered in religious awe. They

laughed in careless unison. And then my uncle entered the room and, as always, became the centre of our attention.

How kind Lady Helen was to me thereafter! She sent me a photograph of herself, torn from a sheet of similar photographs, and bearing a perforated edge like a postage stamp. She also sent me a larger and extremely shiny photograph by Lafayette. It showed her (as the Shannon portrait at Holland House still shows her) nursing a little greyhound. I preserved those photographs for many years.

(5)

Yet it is not in his social moods that I best remember Lord Dufferin. I can recall him better at the time when he was seventy-three and I a schoolboy of thirteen. I see him always as an old man in an arm-chair beside the fireplace in the library; with the green lamp behind him, and at his right hand that special book-case which Sam Moore, son of Tom Moore, had constructed, and which held his lexicons and his Persian vocabularies. After I had gone to school (after Miss Plimsoll had left me) he ceased to be an aloof figure of whom everybody, including even my father, was a trifle afraid. He became, for me, the only member of my family who really cared about Greek.

Above each bookshelf in the Library was printed in gold upon blue the name of some Greek god or goddess. Over the portrait of Sheridan the name 'Chaos' was not unsuitably inscribed. The names then continued from left to right around the room: Aphrodite, Apollo, Ares, Artemis, Athena, and so on. He found me gazing at these letters with my chin



tautened in the air. 'Can you read them?' he asked. I read them correctly, with the exception of 'Chaos', who indeed was puzzling. He was interested in this and took me upstairs. We walked slowly together along the gallery and up the main staircase, past the two narwhal horns which acted as newels, past the figure-head of the *Foam*, past the Burmese bed of Queen Soopaya-Lât, and entered the little domed ante-room which contained the model of his statue in Calcutta, many French fans, and a portrait of his mother. He took me up to the door of my aunt's boudoir. Upon the door was tacked a little tablet of gilded wood bearing the inscription: τὸ τῶν δομῶν ἄγαλμα. 'Can you read that?' he asked. I could read it, but I could not translate the last word. He then took me on to my cousin Hermie's sitting-room, upon the door of which was a similar golden tablet. 'And that?' he asked, placing his broad hand upon my schoolboy shoulder. I read it aloud; Ἑρμιόνη τὸ εἶδος εἶχε χρυσείας Αφροδίτης. I was able to translate that easily, and Cousin Hermie, when I teased her about it afterwards, was justifiably annoyed. But my uncle was much satisfied.

Thereafter he would talk to me sometimes about Greek poets, and read me passages which I could not understand. And when he died my aunt presented me with some of his Greek books. Which I possess to this day.

He was becoming very deaf, and the lexicon had to be held sideways, since his eyesight was failing. Yet he would still try to master his Persian vocabularies and he would still make notes upon the margin of the *Bacchae* or the *Eumenides*. And often he would look

back upon his own resplendent past, reflecting how much, in the span of his lifetime, he had seen and done. Upon the wall of the little staircase which led down into the inner hall, hung the illuminated addresses with which the freedom of Edinburgh and that of Belfast had been conferred upon him in the blazing sunset of his career. Sometimes, on his way down to prayers, he would pause upon the staircase and read again the honours which were cited on those florid manuscripts :

‘ To Frederick Hamilton Temple Blackwood, Baron Dufferin, Baron Dufferin and Clandeboye, Earl of Dufferin and Viscount Clandeboye, Marquis of Dufferin and Ava, Earl of Ava, P.C., K.P., G.C.B., G.C.S.I., G.C.M.G., G.C.I.E., D.C.L., LL.D., F.R.S., Governor-General of Canada, Ambassador to the Courts of Russia, Turkey, and Italy, Ambassador to France, Viceroy of India, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, Vice-Admiral of Ulster, Lord-Lieutenant and Custos Rotulorum for the County of Down, a Justice of the Peace.

‘ Greeting.

‘ Whereas . . . ’

He would reflect also upon those academic honours which had added so welcomely to his list of imperial distinctions. For was he not Chancellor of the Royal University of Ireland, and Lord Rector of the Universities of Edinburgh and St. Andrews ? And was he not a Doctor of Oxford, Cambridge, Trinity, Edinburgh, Harvard, St. Andrews, Laval, Lahore, Toronto, and Dublin ?

That, after seventy-four years of life, was no mean retrospect.

And then, in October of 1899, came the South African War.

## XII

### THE TURN OF THE WHEEL

England at the end of the nineteenth century—The South African War—The disasters of December, 1899—Mafeking celebrations at school—The visit of Queen Victoria—Death of Lord Avebury—Death of James MacFarran—The Queen's visit to Ireland—Mr. Whitaker Wright and the London and Globe—Lord Dufferin becomes chairman of this Corporation but soon sees that its operations are beyond his understanding or control—His endeavours to resign—Mr. Whitaker Wright persuades him to stay on—His third son dangerously wounded in South Africa—He resigns Chairmanship of London and Globe and prepares to leave for the Cape—He then learns that the Corporation is on the verge of bankruptcy and cancels his resignation—The Shareholders' meeting of January 9, 1901—He returns to Clondeboy a ruined man—Epilogue to Mr. Whitaker Wright's speculations—The death of Queen Victoria—The funeral in St. George's Chapel—His illness and his Edinburgh speech—He dies at Clondeboy on February 12, 1902.

#### (I)

THE post-war generation—who are apt to believe that the traditions of their grandfathers remained intact until that Tuesday night of August 4, 1914—are unaware that the self-confidence of the nineteenth century crumbled within its last three weeks. Until those dark days of December, 1899, the people of England were convinced, not only that our might was irresistible, not only that we were beloved by all mankind, but that the savour of our righteousness was sweet and pleasant unto God Himself.

The splendour of our isolation was safeguarded by the might of our fleets and armies ; we held the fate of Europe and the destinies of the world within our grasp ; to countless millions in Africa, in Asia and

in Australasia we had brought the blessings of our faith and culture ; our commerce was supreme in every market from the Yangtsze to the Amazon ; the poor (or at least the deserving poor) were prosperous and contented ; under the aegis of a venerated Queen, the Empire had attained to the very summit of human power and riches ; nor did it seem that this unexampled blessedness would ever cease.

True it was that the two little Dutch Republics in South Africa were behaving with great recalcitrance. Yet President Kruger, as Cecil Rhodes assured us, did not really represent either Transvaal opinion or the feelings of our Dutch brethren in Cape Colony or Natal. The dream of a Cape to Cairo railway had, after Kitchener's magnificent victory at Omdurman, become almost a reality. It was our manifest destiny to impose our will upon these Afrikanders ; by negotiation if we could ; by force if we must. And, after all, how dared these Boer farmers dream of challenging the might of England ? In a few short weeks we should show them how cruelly they had been misled.

I was at my private school at the time and I can recollect the patriotic fervour with which, in October, 1899, we learnt of the declaration of war. A large map of South Africa was placed upon an easel in Big School and the prefects were given little flags with which they could mark out our advance upon Pretoria. Within a few weeks we were all wearing buttons bearing the picture of our particular heroes—Redvers Buller, Sir George White, French, Methuen, Gatacre, and Baden-Powell. And then the news began to dribble in. The prefects, to their horror, were



## THE EARL OF AVA

obliged to move the Boer flags onwards and our own flags back. Sir John Penn Symons was killed at Talana Hill. Ian Hamilton countered with a short-lived victory at Elandslaagte. White and French were falling back upon Ladysmith; that city was about to be invested; and Colonel Carleton surrendered to the enemy after Lombard's Kop.

We were assured that these were but initial movements due to the fact that the Boers, with unutterable duplicity, had been prepared for battle, whereas we had not. In but a few days Buller would arrive with the bulk of the British army, would relieve Ladysmith, and would send the enemy scampering back to Pretoria. I was pleased by these assurances, particularly since one of our earliest defeats had occurred at a place named Nicholson's Nek. This led to much hilarity on the part of my schoolfellows and oppressed me with a sense of embarrassment not unaccompanied by a sense of personal guilt. We waited in happy certainty for the news of Buller's smashing blow.

On December 10 General Gatacre was seriously checked at Stornberg. On December 11 Lord Methuen was beaten at Magersfontein. On December 15 the news reached England that 'fighting Buller' had been defeated at Colenso and had been forced to abandon his guns.

The consternation which these disasters spread throughout England was only equalled by the delight which they evoked abroad. Within the space of a single week we realised that we were anything but invincible and that the nations of Europe regarded us, not with love, but with jealousy and hatred. Were we so sure, even, of the righteousness of our cause?

Had we not been tricked into this ill-prepared escapade by the financiers of the rand, by Cecil Rhodes and his unfortunate friend Dr. Jameson, by Alfred Milner and by Joseph Chamberlain? The idea began to occur to us that we were not only being soundly beaten (and by a fellow one-tenth of our own size) but might also be in the wrong. My own judgment on these imperial affairs was coloured by the views of my father, who, although the most balanced of men, regarded the war as a crime and a mistake, and would willingly have voted for Chamberlain's impeachment. I thus, a shade impulsively perhaps, proclaimed myself a pro-Boer, even as I proclaimed myself a Dreyfusard. This led to unpopularity and discomfort. It was with the self-righteousness, and some of the apprehension, of a martyr, that I would appear, during the eleven o'clock break, upon the playground. There would be cries of patriotism and displeasure; there would be a few racket balls dexterously aimed; there would be some most unpalatable references to that beastly Nek; and on one occasion there was an attempt at the methods of the Inquisition. I do not recall, however, any serious victimisation. Alan Herbert, I remember, who was a kindly boy, took me aside during a game of football. 'You *are* a freak,' he suggested amicably, 'aren't you?' 'None,' I answered (since he was junior to me) 'of your check.' 'I can't,' he countered, 'cheek you.'

My last days at my preparatory school were darkened by these public and private events. But when, in January, 1900, I went to Wellington, I was cautious not to disclose my opinions. Or was it that I no longer maintained them? Dreyfus, by then, had been 'par-



done' by President Loubet. And General Buller, after a final defeat at Spion Kop, had been superseded by Lord Roberts. Victory, from then onwards, seemed assured. In February both Kimberley and Ladysmith were relieved and Cronje surrendered at Paardeberg. In March Lord Roberts captured Bloemfontein and, in June, Pretoria. President Kruger fled his country. The war appeared at an end.

I can remember, also, the day (it was May 18) when the news reached us that Mafeking had been relieved. Of the three sieges, this (although less important than those of Kimberley or Ladysmith) had, owing to the curious publicity it secured, loomed largely in the public imagination. For a few hours England became hysterical. At Wellington we were given a whole holiday. We marched round and round the college precincts, carrying portraits of Baden-Powell garlanded with laurel and pine branches and draped in Union Jacks. I do not recollect that on that occasion I manifested any overt pro-Boer sympathies. I shouted and halloed with the rest.

A few days later Queen Victoria drove over from Windsor to visit her grandson, Prince Alexander of Battenberg, who had just entered the college. At the Master's Lodge she descended from her barouche and was wheeled through the college in a little chair propelled by an Indian attendant. She then re-entered her barouche at Great Gate and a short address was read to her by the head of the school. The boys in the Upper School were allowed, as she drove off, to run beside the carriage. I clung to the mud-guard of the barouche and ran the whole way until I reached the gate by Walter's Woods. She seemed tired by

her visit and sat hunched in her seat with Princess Beatrice very erect beside her. Her chin was hidden by her bonnet ribbons and by the collar of her cape. The picture I retain in my memory is of one large, pendulant, and surprisingly pink cheek ; of the glint of gold spectacles above it ; and of a band beneath the bonnet of beautifully brushed hair—the colour of dried straw.

(2)

For my uncle, who had spent his years in the full blaze of imperial sunshine, the clouds that gathered in the twilight seemed to darken the whole sky. It was with deep despondency that he watched the clock upon the mantelpiece tick out the last few seconds of the nineteenth century. The whole scheme of things for which, for seventy-three years, he had laboured so ardently, appeared, within a few days, to have dissolved in shame and ashes. He looked forward to the new century with a dread which had about it something of presentiment.

The first blow fell in January. His eldest son, who was serving in South Africa under Ian Hamilton, had written home exultantly describing the battle of Elands-laagte, and how he had joined with the Gordon Highlanders in their then famous charge. His letter was soon followed by a telegram reporting that he had been seriously wounded at Waggon Hill. A second telegram, three days later, announced his death. From that moment the lavish gaiety of Clandeboye became a thing of the past.

In April little MacFerran—my uncle's friend and secretary for over twenty years—died suddenly in his

rooms at Clandeboye—those dark little rooms on the mezzanine floor, in which the smell of tobacco hung about the red curtains and the striped red and black wallpaper for months after he lay buried (the first of many) in the Campo Santo.

Still shaken by these two sudden deaths, Lord Dufferin journeyed that April to Dublin. The Queen, after fifty years, was paying her second visit to Ireland and had commanded his presence. He accompanied the Lord-Lieutenant from Dublin to Kingstown and waited with the others upon the landing-stage while the *Victoria and Albert* steamed slowly into Dublin Bay. The ships were dressed, the flags were flying and the guns boomed their salute. Half a century ago, he had waited there in Lord Breadalbane's house, and as the yacht entered the harbour he had seen Lady Jocelyn upon the deck talking to Lord Fortescue. The Queen, that August, had tripped down the gangway on the arm of the Prince Consort surrounded by her children. A little old lady, this April, was wheeled ashore by an Indian attendant. Yes, she remembered it all perfectly ; of course ! he had been Lord in Waiting at the time ; and now he was one of the last of her old friends ; he was one of the few left to her whom she could consult, as she had ' consulted the third Lord Lansdowne and the Duke of Wellington '. He bowed over her hand in humble duty. That was the last time that he saw Queen Victoria.

And then, behind it all, there was the problem of Mr. Whitaker Wright.

This gifted company-promoter had been born in the north of England in the year 1845, and throughout his life he retained in his voice that Northumbrian burr

which inspired confidence and implied solidity. After completing his studies in geology and chemistry he migrated to the United States where he quickly obtained employment with various mining companies. He was able, by strict economy, to save enough money to invest in mining shares and before he was thirty-one he had acquired a large fortune. Such was his reputation in the mining world, that he was elected Chairman of the Philadelphia Mining Exchange. In this capacity he was able to acquire much experience of the psychology of the investing public, of the manipulation of mining shares, and of the value of various mining properties. The unexpected failure of the Gunnison Iron and Coke Company exposed Mr. Wright to the loss of his entire fortune. He thereupon returned to England.

On reaching London Mr. Wright floated the Albaris Mining Company in 1891 and the West Australian Exploring and Finance Company. In 1895 he issued shares for the London and Globe Finance Corporation. From this flotation he netted a profit of £238,436. He thereafter used the London and Globe as a central company through which to promote other ventures. These were the Lake View Consols, the Mainland Consols, the Paddington Consols, and the Wealth of Nations. All these ventures were concerned with the pioneer and profitable task of opening up Western Australia.

Mr. Wright, by 1897, had recovered both his reputation and his capital. He was able to buy out the original London and Globe plus the West Australia, and to promote a new Corporation again entitled 'The London and Globe Finance Corporation', which

superseded the former company of the same name, and of which he appointed himself Managing Director. The capital of this new company consisted of two million one pound shares of which Mr. Wright received £605,000 for himself. Having formed this Company, he began to look about for reputable directors. He first fixed upon Lord Loch, who had been Governor of Victoria from 1884-1889. Lord Loch, after a few months experience of the London and Globe, decided that the many calls upon his time did not justify him in retaining the onerous duties of its chairmanship. He suggested to Lord Dufferin, who had just retired from the Paris Embassy, and who 'loathed being idle', that he might well accept the chairmanship in his place. Lord Dufferin agreed to this suggestion. A few weeks after his acceptance of the chairmanship, the shares of the London and Globe rose to £2 each.

It will simplify this complicated and tragic story if at this stage I give, in summary form, the figures of the various companies which the London and Globe thereafter promoted :

December, 1897—British American	..	£1,500,000
February, 1898—Standard	..	£1,500,000
November, 1899—Le Roi Mines	..	£1,000,000
August, 1899—Caledonia Copper	..	£750,000
November, 1899—Nickel Corporation	..	£750,000
November, 1900—Baker Street and Water- loo Railway	..	£2,385,000
November, 1900—London Valley Gold- fields	..	£750,000

## (3)

All these extensive and profitable ventures were administered from a central office at No. 43 Lothbury, with a single staff of clerks and under Whitaker Wright's direct control. From these adventures he made a second enormous fortune and became a commanding figure in the city, where he was generally known as 'W. W.' He managed, moreover, to acquire great publicity by the fantastic extravagance of his private life. He acquired a great mansion in Park Lane adjoining Londonderry House. 'The drawing-room was a replica of the 'Cabinet des Rois' of Louis XV. The walls were hung with Watteau and Boucher. The dinner parties which he gave were expensive and well advertised.

Even more welcome to the then increasingly popular Press was his country house, at Lea Park, Witley. It was widely reported that in this almost suburban estate Mr. Wright had revived the luxuries and the enterprise of the Roman Emperors. He moved mountains, he transplanted orchards, he made valleys blossom where not the slightest declivity had existed before. He possessed a private observatory, a private theatre, a private velodrome, a private hospital. His stables contained no less than fifty horses, each one of which was accommodated in a separate cubicle, the ceilings of which were decorated with plaster representations of the chase and equipped with the electric light. In the centre of this stable was a luxury lounge complete with palm trees and leather sofas. There was a subterranean grotto off one of the lakes, illumined by coloured lights, through

which (as if at Capri) the guests would be rowed by Italian boatmen. Mr. Wright much enjoyed the game of billiards, and caused a special billiard room to be constructed at the bottom of the lake. Through the glass window, which was illumined by powerful electric bulbs, the players could observe the great eyes of ancient carp (specially transported from Azay le Rideau) silently watching their prowess or their inefficiency. And, during August, the papers were filled with the exploits of his yacht, the *Sybarita*, which had defeated the *Meteor* of the German Emperor before the aloof but admiring gaze of the Royal Yacht Squadron.

It was not surprising that the London and Globe, thus advertised in the person of its Managing Director, possessed as it was of such extensive properties, should have prospered exceedingly. Yet in November, 1900, a whisper began to run round Lothbury and beyond. W. W., in placing so much money in the Baker Street and Waterloo Railway, had, it was rumoured, over-reached himself. The British public, suspecting these subterranean adventures, refused to buy the Bakerloo shares. W. W., it was suggested, had for once been caught short. A slump first set in on the Lake View shares. Mr. Wright, justly confident in the soundness of this mine and of his own stability, bought in these shares with reckless daring. The shares fell in a single day from 12 to 8½. The London and Globe, during the year 1899, lost £750,000 through this single speculation. The British public, meanwhile, and quite mistakenly, retained their dislike of the Bakerloo. The rumours increased in volume and extent. And on December 28, 1900, the London and

Globe announced its insolvency. A panic followed. No less than thirty members were hammered upon the Stock Exchange. Many of the subsidiary companies were forced into liquidation. And thousands of small investors found themselves ruined overnight.

(4)

As Chairman of the London and Globe Finance Corporation, Lord Dufferin found himself in the most unenviable position. Not only had he invested a large part of his private fortune in the undertakings which Mr. Whitaker Wright had grouped within the hospitable doors of No. 43 Lothbury, but he could not disguise from himself that the prestige of his own name might well have induced many investors to place their money in these adventures. The point is one which can well be exaggerated. The shares of the London and Globe and its subsidiary companies were never regarded, or proclaimed, as gilt-edged. The people who had placed their money in these experiments did not belong to the investing public so much as to the speculating public; and the latter had ventured their money, not so much because of their belief in Lord Dufferin's integrity, as because of their faith in the financial genius of W. W. For months Lord Dufferin had realised that the Stock Exchange manipulations of Mr. Wright were getting beyond his own understanding or control. Again and again had he tendered his resignation, only to be persuaded by Mr. Wright that the subsidiary companies were perfectly sound investments (as indeed they were) and that his sudden resignation of the chairmanship would destroy confidence and bring the whole edifice crashing



around their ears. W. W. appealed to his loyalty and his sense of duty. Naturally it would take the British public some months to appreciate the Bakerloo. Once they did so, the shares would boom and the London and Globe would once again make a resounding profit. To leave at this moment would be to act with great disloyalty and to jeopardise the savings of many fatherless children, motherless daughters, widows and children. Lord Dufferin was impressed, worried, but unconvinced.

In December, 1900, a telegram was received stating that their youngest son, Frederick, had been dangerously wounded in South Africa. Lord Dufferin at once booked a passage to the Cape; he at the same time sent in his resignation as Chairman of the London and Globe. Here, at least, was an excuse that everybody would understand. He could rid himself of this octopus and at the same time avoid creating a panic upon the Exchange. Mr. Whitaker Wright was dumbfounded on receiving this intimation. He wrote to Lord Dufferin informing him that the London and Globe was about to enter into liquidation. His resignation, and his departure for South Africa, would be regarded as an escape: the ship was sinking, and its Chairman could not be the first to leave it. The pride, the courage, the integrity and the self-sacrifice of Lord Dufferin left him no alternative. He cancelled his passage to South Africa; he withdrew his resignation; and he prepared himself to face the outraged shareholders at the Cannon Street Hotel.

It was an aged and a broken man who on that 9th of January, 1901, confronted an audience of two thousand investors. When he and Whitaker Wright

entered that congested room, there were some hisses among the audience which were drowned by sympathetic cheers. Lord Dufferin spoke of the 'deepest mortification' with which he rose on that occasion. He had always assumed, he said, that the Stock Exchange operations of their companies would be conducted by their most able Managing Director, Mr. Whitaker Wright. He himself had found that these operations 'were not only far more complicated and extensive than he had imagined but that none who had not been brought up in the business could ever hope to master its intricacies.' (Laughter.) He went on to say, that at many previous meetings, he had warned the shareholders that he knew nothing of such operations. Ought he to have resigned as soon as he realized his own incapacity for control? But that would have placed the shareholders in an even worse position than they were already. As it was, he would himself be a greater sufferer than any. 'Yet,' he concluded, 'I should regret this less—indeed I should not regret it at all—if my heavy losses of private fortune were to convince you of my bona fides.'

They received this speech with distressed sympathy. 'Anything more generous,' he wrote afterwards, 'than the conduct of our shareholders you cannot imagine. Instead of tearing me to pieces as I imagined, the two thousand gentlemen assembled in Cannon Street received me as if I had been Lord Roberts. One is proud of such an incident for the sake of human nature.'

Yet he had no illusions as to what had happened. He referred to it as 'an indescribable calamity which

will cast a cloud over the remainder of my life  
And to his wife he wrote at the time :

‘ Your letters are my greatest comfort. You have been everything to me in my prosperous days and they have been many ; and now you are even more to me in my adversity. But what I feel so dreadfully is that *your* life should be thus suddenly overwhelmed just as we thought to enjoy the evening sunshine of our days in our happy home.’

The epilogue to this disaster must be recorded. The official receiver who conducted the liquidation of the London and Globe, and of its subsidiary companies, found that the balance sheets and reports of these companies had not been in order. The accounts had been manipulated in such a manner as to conceal deficits, and the dividends paid by the Globe had not represented earned profits but only advances from the other companies. Let us be fair to Whitaker Wright. The companies which he controlled or floated were in no case bogus companies. Eventually, each one of them proved itself to be a sound and prosperous undertaking. What happened was that the investing public, as in the case of the Bakerloo, were slower to realise the value of these shares than Whitaker Wright had estimated. He knew very well that in time all his ships would come into harbour, as indeed they did. Pending their arrival, he juggled with the accounts. Thus if the balance sheet of one company was due, say on October 1, he would, on September 25 make a large loan to that company from some other company under his control, and then repay that loan on October 3. Lord

Dufferin failed to notice this manipulation. Nor was it clear under Company Law, as it then existed, at what point Whitaker Wright had acted criminally. The papers were referred to the Public Prosecutor who refused to take action. The matter slumbered until February 19, 1903.

On that date Mr. George Lambert, in the House of Commons, moved a motion calling attention to the fact that no proceedings had been taken against the Directors of the London and Globe. He suggested that the whole episode had been hushed up by the Government owing to the 'aristocratic directorate of the Company in question'. 'What is sauce,' he said, 'for Jabez Balfour, is sauce for the Globe.'

On reading this speech in his paper the next morning, Whitaker Wright immediately escaped to France and from there to the United States. The Law Officers of the Crown had, since Mr. Lambert's motion, discovered that although Whitaker Wright could scarcely be prosecuted under the existing Company Law, yet he could be prosecuted under the Larceny Act of 1861. A demand for his extradition was thus addressed to the United States, and after resisting this demand with the assistance of his American lawyers, Wright suddenly surrendered and returned to England.

His trial began in the King's Bench Division of the Law Courts on January 11, 1904. The prosecution was brilliantly conducted by Rufus Isaacs and the defence with almost equal brilliance by Mr. Lawson Walton. Whitaker Wright, in his frock coat, his little goatee beard, his sturdy self-righteousness, was at first a model of competent imperturbability. As the trial proceeded, he began to lose his calm. And when

Lord Mersey began his ruthless summing up, Whitaker Wright contented himself with scribbling on his blotting pad the initials W. W. and the sinister figure VII. He was in fact condemned to seven years penal servitude. He received his sentence with dignity and retired, with his solicitor, George Lewis, and the court tipstaff, into the room which had been placed at his disposal. He asked the tipstaff whether he might withdraw for a few moments into the adjoining lavatory. The request was accorded. He returned a few minutes later and asked for a cigar. It was noticed that, as he lit it, his hand was trembling. He then threw the cigar away and walked to the window. He was observed to sway a little and to be clutching at his thighs. They put it down to the emotion of the moment. He then turned sharply back into the room, tried to reach the arm-chair, and collapsed in agony upon the carpet. It was found at the inquest that he had swallowed a capsule of cyanide of potassium.

But when that happened, Lord Dufferin had been dead for almost exactly two years.

(5)

For a man so sensitive to public criticism as was Lord Dufferin, the newspaper comments upon that shareholders' meeting of January 9, 1901, had been an agony to the soul. There were none who questioned his integrity of purpose or who failed to admire the courage with which he had faced the catastrophe when it came. There were many, none the less, who blamed him for having lent his name to undertakings which he admittedly did not understand and to operations which he admittedly had been unable to follow.

Against such accusations he had no unanswerable defence. In his own conscience, he knew that the whole tragic business had encased him gradually, and that his honour had been compromised because he had regarded it as dishonourable to run away. There had been that fatal day in 1897 when Lord Loch had persuaded him to accept the chairmanship; all those whom he had consulted had agreed that the several properties of the London and Globe were perfectly sound and that Whitaker Wright was in fact a Napoleon among financiers; there had been the ingenious plausibility of Wright himself and the convincing facts and figures which he would produce to banish doubt and to overcome hesitation; there had followed those many years during which he had tried to extricate himself from a position which he knew was passing increasingly beyond his understanding, always to be met with the argument that for him to resign would create a panic upon the Stock Exchange and that such desertion in the hour of difficulty would be a betrayal of those who had invested their savings owing to the confidence inspired by his name. The outside world could know nothing of the subtle gradations by which this cancer had caught him in its grasp. He returned to Clandeboye broken in fortune, in reputation, and in health.

Only a few days after his return he learnt that yet another landmark in his life was about to fall. The Queen was sinking. On the evening of Tuesday, January 22, she died. Owing to some error, the invitation to St. George's Chapel did not reach him until the last moment. He crossed to England at a few hours notice and arrived at Windsor, exhausted

by this hurried journey and by the crowds at Paddington. He wrote to his wife :

‘ On entering the Chapel I waited, miserably cold and in a great draught, for nearly three hours. I was already threatened with an attack upon my chest, and this I thought would finish me, but though I was perished at the time I was none the worse . . . At last, however, the doors were flung open ; the Duke of Norfolk with his heralds fluttering round him entered, and soon after came the coffin. As it passed before me I could think of nothing but the poor dear Lady who was lying within it, who had been so kind a friend to me for fifty years, and had never changed, writing me such kind letters, almost to the end of her days. Indeed, so absorbed was I in these thoughts, that the throng of princes that followed passed quite unobserved, and I did not come to myself until all that was left me to look at was the tail of the procession.

‘ My one poor eye is dotted over with spots, so that I can hardly read, and the oculist I consulted is not very consolatory, but I am in hopes it is only worry and fatigue.’

He refused, none the less, to cancel his public engagements. In June he crossed to Glasgow to receive an honorary degree, and in October he presided at the convocation of the Royal University of Ireland. Upon the very next day he travelled to England and attended a ceremony at the Indian Institute in Oxford. ‘ It was there,’ writes Sir Alfred Lyall (and the quotation is worth repeating), ‘ that I saw Lord Dufferin for the last time. He was standing on Magdalen Bridge, looking down the stream towards the sunset, absorbed, as it seemed to me, in the remembrance of bygone days.’

On his return to London he was taken seriously ill

with gastric inflammation and was attended by Sir William Broadbent. The latter warned him that it would be unsafe for him to attend the Edinburgh Convocation in November or to deliver his Rectorial address. He refused to cancel this engagement and travelled up to Edinburgh on November 11. He was ill all the 12th and the 13th but was strong enough to stand at the window of his room to see the torchlight procession which the students had arranged. On November 14 he delivered his address. 'He looked,' recorded Lady Dufferin in her journal, 'desperately ill, and there was something tragic in seeing him stand up before the immense audience of gay and somewhat noisy students, the professors and people of Edinburgh, when he was so weak and unfit for the effort. He was obliged to sit down to read most of it, but he rose again to finish it. Even after this, he would not give in but would do all he promised to do. We drove over to the Students' Union, where we had a cup of tea and a short rest, and then he went up to the concert room and sat through a few songs. Then I got him home and to bed. He had again to go out to the theatre for an hour. In the night I had to send for the doctor as he was in great pain.'

'On the following day,' records Lady Dufferin, 'he remained in bed till the evening, when he got up and went to reply to a toast at the Conservative Students' Banquet. He quite revived for this, and made a most successful and amusing speech, and was himself enthusiastically received. This was his last speech and last appearance in public.'

On Sunday, November 17, he returned to Clande-boye. His strength was gradually failing and by



January 18, 1902, the doctors had abandoned all hope. His children were summoned and remained at Clandeboy waiting wretchedly for the end. They spent their time in cutting down the laurels in the rose garden, which had grown to such a height that they obscured the view of Helen's Tower.

He died in the early morning of February 12.

Three days before his death he dictated the following letter to the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury :

‘ Being, as the doctors seem to say, on my death-bed, I desire, while I still have my wits about me, to place in your hands my resignation of the Chancellorship of the Royal University of Ireland, as well as the Lieutenancy of the County.

‘ I suppose that, under the circumstances, ill-health will be regarded as a valid excuse. I desire also to thank you for the great kindness and consideration you have never failed to show me since the time you started me in my diplomatic career, for having kept the Italian Embassy so long open for me, and for innumerable acts of kindness.

‘ I do not think you ever knew how much I liked you from the time you were a thin, frail, little lower boy at Cookesley's, even then writing, as my tutor used to say, such clever essays.

‘ This is all I have the strength to say. Good-bye and God bless you.

‘ Ever yours,

DUFFERIN AND AVA.’

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